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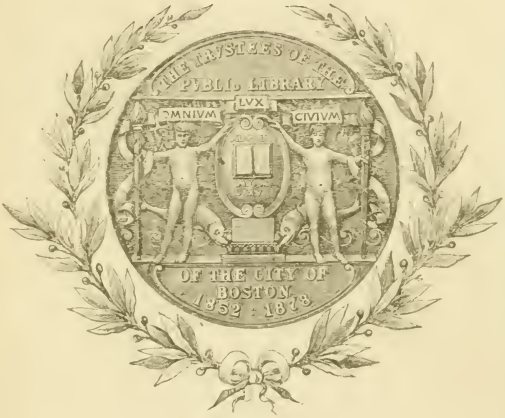

PHIL VERNON

AND HIS SCHOOL-MASTERS.

A STORY OF AMERICAN SCHOOL LIFE.

BY

BYRON A. BROOKS,

AUTHOR OF "KING SAUL, A TRAGEDY," "THOSE CHILDREN," ETC.

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TO MY SON,

BYRON HAROLD,

ONE OF THE BOYS

FOR WHOM THIS BOOK IS WRITTEN, AND TO ALL OTHER GENUINE BOYS WHO WISH TO BECOME TRUE MEN,

THIS VOLUME

Is Affectionately Dedicated,

WITH THE DESIRE THAT THEY MAY ALL BE AIDED BY IT TO ATTAIN TO THAT NOBLE END.

THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

IT is life that educates us; not only the brief portion of it called school-days, and the still briefer period spent in study, but every influence, act, and thought, which occupies our existence in this preparatory school of earth, until we are graduated into the university of the hereafter. The boy's main business is to make a man of himself. His ambition is to be a man as soon as possible; and if it be to become a true, noble, manly man, he should be encouraged in every possible manner.

Every event, experience, and companionship, from the time when he begins to examine his fingers to learn who is their owner, and to get his toe into his mouth to find out what it is made of, and thence goes out on a constant exploring expedition into the world in which he finds himself, all join to make his true education.

A very small part of this education can be derived from books. Hugh Miller in the stone quarry, Livingstone at the loom, and Washington in the wilderness, were at school with the oldest and best of teachers, preparing for their great work. In fact, experience is the only teacher. What the child, the youth, the

man, finds out by doing, feeling, suffering, is the only education worthy of the name.

Instructors are beginning to learn that knowledge cannot be poured into their pupils; that their chief function is to stand as guide-posts to point out the way, or to serve as "awful examples" of useless learning. We learn to do, by doing; to walk, by falling.

I have endeavored in this story to trace the life of a real, live, average boy, placed amid natural and healthful surroundings, under various influences good and bad, through the experiences in school and out, in the fields and in the town, in his sports and his more serious occupations, with his companions and his teachers, which combine to form his character and develop his innate being; that is, to educate him.

In a former story, "Those Children and Their Teachers," I have endeavored to point out to parents and teachers the true and false in education. In "Phil Vernon," I try to show how the youth educates himself by the unsought happenings of daily life; and where fiction is woven with reality, it aims to illustrate the same great fact: all life is a school, and all the men and women learners.

BYRON A. BROOKS.

BROOKLYN, *June* 8, 1885.

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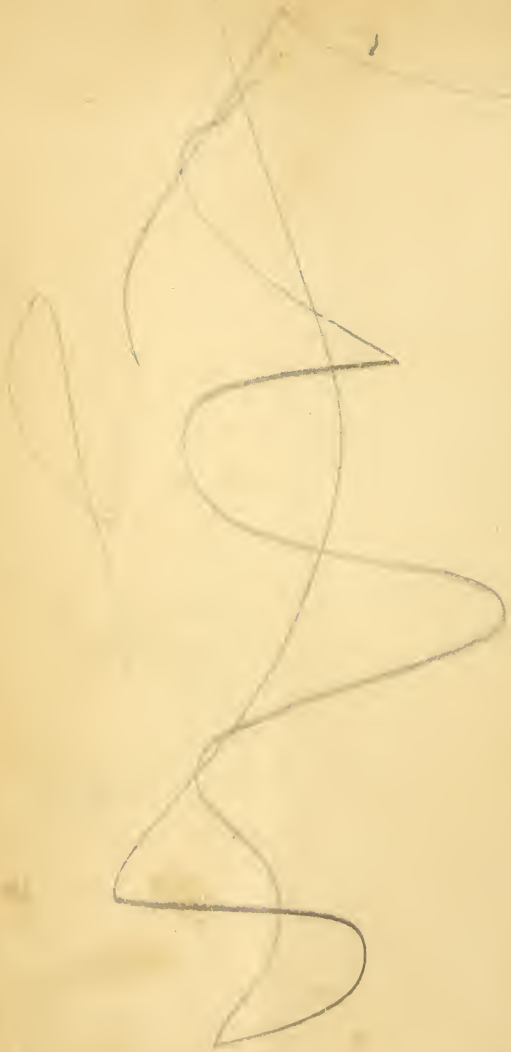


PHIL VERNON

AND

HIS SCHOOL-MASTERS.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST LESSONS.

OLD BOREAS might be called Phil Vernon's first school-master, and Jack Frost his first playmate; for it was in the bleak December that he took his place in the infant class of life's school. His native village was shut off from the other parts of the country by the great wilderness of the Adirondacks, which was known as the North Woods, or "John Brown's Tract." To the children it was a veritable wonder-land, peopled with lions, tigers, "wild Indians," and whatever dire and

dismal shapes childhood's fancy might conjure. Now it is the paradise of preachers and painters, where, like poor Lo, they hope to go to the happy hunting ground.

This vast forest is the source of numerous picturesque streams flowing in all directions through the surrounding valleys. One of these has a natural bridge, similar to the famous bridge in Virginia; and another has the beautiful Trenton Falls, second in interest only to the great Niagara.

On the banks of one of these streams was the home of Phil's boyhood, in the romantic village of Florence. The stream is called the Indian River, doubtless in memory of the red warriors who had in times not very remote tracked the deer along its shores, speared the muskollonge in its waters, or trapped the musk-rat and the mink upon its banks. Or it might have been named from its dusky color, which resembles that of the red man.

This village contained but one church. Among Phil's earliest recollections was that

of going with his father to the little white "meeting-house" at the head of the street, where the Presbyterians held meetings in the morning, and the Methodists in the afternoon. Of the sermons he remembered only that the morning one was very learned—and very long, and the prayer seemingly interminable, as he stood upon his little feet anxiously noting its stages, of which the petition for the President was the middle and the summit from which he could catch sight of the welcome "amen."

The afternoon discourse was not long, but loud; and the prayers were interrupted by frequent responses from the "amen seats," which he understood as intimations to the preacher to make an end of his prayer, and which consequently were heard with joy. On one occasion he could not refrain from putting in that interjection himself, much to the surprise of the good minister, who brought his prayer to a sudden end at this indication of early piety.

His earliest playmate was his younger sister

Nell, her bright and active disposition nearly compensating for the difference in age. She was named Helen, after their grandmother, who for many years had lived with Phil's father, Dr. Vernon.

One of their first lessons was in the school of Madam Experience. On the edge of the village, the limit of the children's rambles, was a wood, to them the boundary of the world. In their childish way of reckoning distances, they called it almost to Uncle John's, which was about fifteen miles from the village, as beyond the woods there were no familiar objects by which to measure distances. This wood they were forbidden to enter, and they seldom ventured farther than to pick up a few beech nuts by the road-side. But one beautiful morning in autumn they ventured to climb the fence, on the other side of which lay the forbidden fruit, where the nuts were plentiful and sweeter. Soon, to their great delight, a red squirrel scampered up to a log beside them, and perching himself upon it, opened a lively

conversation, chattering and frisking his tail, running a short distance and then back, with many a knowing wink and nod, as if he could tell where the nuts were ever so much plentier and larger. Allured by his familiarity, they thought to catch him and take him home. But as they advanced, notwithstanding his apparent confidence, he took the precaution to keep just out of their reach. Still they followed on, calling him all manner of pet names until the cunning animal, seeming to perceive they were not so much after beech nuts as after him, suddenly sprang up a tree with a saucy whisk of his tail, and indignantly chattering "No you don't," quickly disappeared. The squirrel was lost, and so were they. They thought they saw the clearing just before them, which, like the fatal mirage, ever receded as they approached. Gradually the trees became closer and larger, and though the sun was still climbing the sky, they could scarcely see it. Strange sounds were noticed with frightened exclamations of "What's

that?" which sounds were only the falling of a nut or the rustling of a squirrel in the dry leaves. Once they saw with alarm a woodchuck sitting by his hole and looking with wonder upon them, yet prudently retreating into his den, then quickly putting out his head to make observations. Again a hedge-hog sprang up before them, to which they gave a wide berth, as they had heard strange stories of his power to throw his poisonous quills. Though these incidents tended to increase their alarm, they trudged bravely on, neither willing to own to being afraid. But finally Nell cautiously broached the subject which was causing both their little hearts to tremble.

"Phil," said she, "Phil, what—if—we—should—see—a—bear?"

"Don't be afraid," said he, stoutly. "I'll take care of you," at the same time brandishing a stick which he had prudently picked up for defense in such an emergency.

"But could you kill him with that stick?" she inquired, hardly confiding in his strength.

"Why, don't you know," he replied, "that David killed a bear with a shepherd's staff, and a lion, too? And I am as big as David," said he, stretching himself to his full height.

"O, but a lion, Phil, you couldn't kill him?"

"Well, we could climb a tree," he replied. "I wouldn't run, any way, would you, Nell?"

"No," she replied, hesitatingly; "not unless he was very big, you know."

"Never mind," said he, trying to keep up his own courage, "keep right behind me, and I'll take care of you."

Just then the frightened sister seized his arm and gasped,

"What's that?"

In the distance he caught sight of a reddish brown animal, larger than any he had seen, appearing and disappearing among the trees.

"A bear! a bear!" he screamed, and forgetting his courage, seized his sister's hand and started to run. On they ran as fast as they could, crying and falling over stones and logs, until, exhausted, they fell at the foot of a

large oak, and, like frightened children at night, hid their faces in the leaves. They listened, and at first could hear nothing. Soon they detected a loud rustling of the leaves and crackling of sticks as something approached them. Nearer and nearer came the heavy steps until they stopped beside them, and they held their breath, expecting the next instant to feel the bear's huge paws and teeth upon them.

"Waal, childers, what ye doin' here?" said a gruff voice. "Babes in the woods, I vow." And the great, good-natured wood-chopper lifted them in his arms.

"Have—have you killed the bear?" Phil gasped, as soon as he could find his breath.

"The bar?" asked the woodman; "there's no bar."

"But we saw him," they exclaimed.

"'Twas a fox, I guess," he said; "there's plenty on 'em in these woods. What's yer name?" he kindly asked.

Being told, he took them to the road in

sight of home, and told them to scamper. They "scampered" without delay, and soon were at home telling, with many tears, the story of their disobedience and its punishment. They were forgiven without the needless "don't do so again." But their mother refused to confirm the chopper's assertion that there were no bears in those woods.

CHAPTER II.

LOVE AND LETTERS.

PHIL and Nell were first introduced to the twenty-six staring strangers of the alphabet by their grandmother. Two of the strangers, B and D, were a source of great trouble to Nell, who could not distinguish them, nor remember their names. At last, her grandma, thrown upon her resources for an expedient, took the two offending letters and pasted one upon each of the thumbs of Nell's hands. Then she was told to distinguish them as the B hand and the D hand. The plan promised well, and bid fair to overcome the difficulty, when an unforeseen accident overthrew this well-laid scheme.

The second day Nell came running into the house in consternation, crying, "Grandma, grandma! I've swallowed D. What shall I

do? I've swallowed D!" Her grandmother endeavored to calm her, telling her that no harm was done, when she exclaimed, in triumph: "I guess I've got it now anyhow, for it's in my stomach."

This first page of their studies at last was turned, and their progress increased when they saw the same strangers, whom they expected never to meet again, assorted into pairs of Ab's and Ba's, and go waltzing down the page led off by Baker with his rolls on his head, and brought up suddenly at the bottom by stern Quaker, standing as stiff as his staff.

After making the acquaintance of these, they were sent to the "select school," as it was called. Pretty Miss Fraser was the teacher. How kind and gentle and loving she was! Phil fell in love with her the first day. Thus it came about. He sat on the front row of seats, and being unaccustomed to the confinement, and the afternoon being warm, he fell asleep and fell off from the seat. The older scholars laughed, while the surprised

and frightened child was ready to cry. Then the teacher chided the children, took him in her arms, and let him hide his confusion on her breast while she gently soothed and reassured him. Ever after his seat was by her side. She called him her little man, and he was her most devoted admirer from that hour. His heart was given to her as truly as any lover's. The difference of age never occurred to him. He was old enough to love, and she certainly not too old to be loved. What happy days were those! How gently she led him into the various paths of knowledge! How patiently she guided his untrained hand across the fly-tracked page of his copy-book! Though he has spoiled many pages of paper since, none are so dear as that old book, with its strange hieroglyphics, amid which can faintly be seen the delicate characters of his teacher's hand.

Arithmetic, with its pictured title-page, representing the temple of learning, over which might well be written the Dantean legend,

"All hope abandon ye who enter here," and inclosing in grim sarcasm a group of happy children with large slates in their hands, as if making figures were the chief end of man; arithmetic, the bridge of sighs that leads from the enchanted island of childhood into the prison-house of school, was divested of all its terrors in the hands of Phil's gentle teacher. Here he learned to grapple at once with Colburn's famous conundrum, "How many thumbs on your right hand, and how many on your left?" and even to contemplate the more profound problem, "How many toes on all your feet?" With patient assiduity and wise condescension, all the crooked paths were made straight, for love made it pleasant.

A frequent expression of his regard for his teacher was to bring her the largest and reddest peony he could find in his mother's garden. Yet it was never despised. "How beautiful, how sweet!" she would exclaim, and place it on her desk, where it would remain all day, the most conspicuous object in the room,

and casting a warm glow upon the pale cheeks of the fair teacher. He wished all to love her, and if he heard a light word of her among his school-mates, it called a blush to his cheek and a pain to his heart far greater than if said of himself. Yet he could not resent it. Her name, to him, was too dear to be lightly mentioned.

Alas! true love does not run smoothly. One day an intruder came. A young man, with red hair and whiskers, visited the school-room and seemed on friendly terms with the teacher. He addressed the children in pompous style, and told them to be good and love their teacher; for they might not have her long, with a side glance at her, which called the color to her cheek. This suggestion filled him with vague alarm. It had never occurred to him that she was not to be always his teacher. Another circumstance tended to increase his fears. After school he saw them in close conversation, and heard something much like a kiss. There was nothing in that to trouble him; for he loved to

kiss her himself, and saw no reason why others should not have the same privilege; but there was an air about the young man as if she belonged to himself alone. These feelings made Phil very unhappy. Often the tears would start to his eyes, but his teacher inquired the cause in vain. She became doubly affectionate to him, and at length he began to feel reassured, when he heard the report that she was soon to be married. This troubled him little until there was added the announcement that she was to leave the village at the end of the term.

"And never coming back?" he cried, with a breaking heart.

"I will come back to see you," she answered, but he refused to be comforted. The term soon passed. The "last day" came, a day full of pleasure to all the scholars; but to him it seemed the last day of the world. He thought he could not live; but the promise of his teacher, as he clung around her neck in despair, that she would return next summer gave

him hope, though "next summer" seemed an age to him.

Dear, sweet Miss Fraser! Phil never saw her again. Whether she went to a happy home and a long life, or soon to her eternal home, he never learned. But wherever she went, his love followed her; while her name ever lingered with sweetest fragrance in the garden of his childhood's memory, hallowed by the recollection of his earliest love.

CHAPTER III.

SCHOOL IN THE FIELDS.

PHIL'S grandmother was an invalid. He had never seen her walk. She was a great sufferer, but it was many years before he learned it, and then not from her. It was his greatest privilege to go to her room, where she always received him with a smile and a cheering word. How beautiful she seemed, half-reclining on her snowy bed, her lace cap only partially concealing her gray hair, of which many a wavy ringlet fell upon her clear, white brow. Her dark, bright eyes indicated the mental activity by which she employed her time in recalling the stores of her wondrous memory. She was the dictionary and encyclopedia of the household, and to the children more than teacher. She was their public, whom they were proud to please; their judge,

to decide all their disputes; their confidant and comfort in all their troubles. Her hand or her voice distributed the reward of merit, and her displeasure was their greatest punishment. To her they came for amusement as well as instruction, and drew from her tales more entertaining than Robinson Crusoe, and more inexhaustible than the Thousand and One Nights. Many were the fictions by which she enticed them into the ways of duty, or guarded them from evil, stories which were to them more than truths, and which they never discovered to be the fairy creation of her mind until she had gone into the presence of the eternal verities, and they had found life to have too many stern facts and too few fair fancies. She taught them numberless lessons, not found in books, from things about them; by kindly questioning she awakening their ardent minds to the nature of the world they lived in.

"It is life that educates us," said grandmother. "All true education begins at the ends

of the fingers, as the infant handles his rattle, looks at it, and puts it into his mouth to test its effect upon all his senses." The five doors, she called them, from which they could go forth on wondrous voyages of discovery. Fortunately for Phil, his father assisted in his education by taking him with him upon many of his rides about the country. In these excursions he learned the names and marks of the common varieties of trees and plants, of birds and their habits; how the squirrel spends the winter in his well-stored house in the hollow tree, and the rabbits in their warm home beneath the snow. He went with him to the factory and learned the laws of machinery, and the process of carding wool and weaving cloth. On clear winter evenings as they walked down the streets, and looked upon the starry jewels flashing in the crystal sky, he took a lesson in astronomy, which subsequent knowledge could not improve. And when he saw the bright moon, with its broad and solemn face, rise slowly behind the little church, so

near and yet so far, he felt as the philosopher cannot feel, that we live in the midst of mysteries and miracles.

The next summer after Miss Fraser's departure Phil went to school in the fields. His teacher was Dame Nature herself, and his companions the birds, the brooks, the squirrels, trees, flowers, and all that lived and moved. Many were the operations in real estate which he carried on in a neighboring sand-bank, in which he dug beautiful houses and laid out extensive grounds, only to demolish them and build larger as his means and ambitions increased by possession. Or an occasional rain-storm would make rents in the sand-bank, and undermine all his work with that unconcern which nature always shows when, provoked by man's unlawful digging into the hide of this old world, she shakes herself with flood or earthquake, as if to drive the intruder from her domain.

The sand-bank is leveled now, and that retired street is the main thoroughfare to the

depot which stands in the midst of Phil's playground, and through it screams the iron-horse, the great destroyer of sacred spots, rejoicing in the ruin he has wrought. Near by runs the creek on which the children paddled planks, with unfailing fun; in which they bathed and fished. But how shriveled and shallow now! On its banks is the woodchuck's hole, down which they poured water one whole afternoon to bring him up; but he did not appear, and whether drowned or not is to this day among the things unknown.

Many a day did Phil trudge with his box traps to the strip of woods which lined the river's rugged bank, and patiently wait for the squirrels, which would not be caught with chaff nor with good corn. He always had a high opinion of the intelligence of squirrels. He was much impressed with a dialogue in his reading-book between a small boy and a squirrel, the former trying to tempt the squirrel to come down and live in his house, "As nice, as nice could be; the prettiest little house that

ever you did see." But the squirrel prefers liberty to luxury, and politely answers, "No, thank you, little boy, I am very well up here." And that's what they said to Phil. But one bright morning, having carefully set his trap and sprinkled corn some distance around, he saw a lovely red squirrel come chattering along and eat one of the kernels. One by one he picked them up, each leading to the fatal trap, while Phil watched with bated breath until the squirrel entered the box. Down went the lid and Phil ran to secure his prize and bore it home in triumph. But his triumph was short. One night the squirrel slipped between the wires of his cage and escaped.

To recompense him for his loss a friend gave him a pair of beautiful gray squirrels. Jack and Jennie were his most highly prized pets. He exhausted his boyish skill in making them a suitable house. They were too plump from high living to escape as Reddy had done, and were quite tame. When let out of the cage, Jack would frisk around in the most social manner,

and eat bread out of Phil's hand, to his great delight. But Jennie pined for her old free home, and one day gave him the slip and bade him good-bye forever. Jack was a knowing animal. One day, when out of his cage, Phil gave him an ear of corn. Seizing it in his mouth he started for his cage, but the door was too narrow to admit the long ear. After several attempts to get it into the door, Jack dropped it upon the floor and deliberately set to work to gnaw it in two in the middle, which being done he easily took the two parts, one by one, into his cage. What better could man, the reasoning animal, have done? But Jack experienced the usual effects of luxury. It shortened his days. He sickened and died. Great was Phil's grief at this loss. It was shared by his sister Nell and his playmates, and they determined to give him a fitting burial. Phil made a little coffin and dug his grave in the garden, whither they followed in sad and solemn procession. Many sincere tears were shed as they laid poor Jack in his little

bed. One of the older boys recited over his grave the beautiful lines on the death of Sir John Moore, which he had learned at school, and which all thought very appropriate, particularly the last lines:

> "We carved not a line, we raised not a stone,
> But left him alone with his glory."

Phil drove a stake into the ground to mark the spot, as he thought "how the stranger would tread o'er his head." In Phil's old copy-book he made this entry, "Sept. 14, 1854, Jackey Gray died to-day."

Thus he passed the summer in nature's joyous school. The closer he came to her bosom the nearer he seemed to heaven. All things were mysteries, yet mysteries to which he held the key in childhood's faith and fancy. He understood the twitterings of the swallows under the eaves of the barn, as they discussed their approaching flight. He knew the strident words of the crows, as they called to each other from the tree-tops, conspiring for a

descent upon a neighboring corn-field, or held solemn meetings in the old hemlocks on Sunday morning with more noise than sense. The tapering pines were spires pointing to heaven, and the trailing elms its overshadowing love descending to the earth. The numerous mounds were Indian graves, and oft he sat by a nameless mound and thought that perhaps beside him slumbered an Indian bold, who once had been king of the forest.

One calm afternoon, when he lay outstretched upon the earth in the tall grass, nature took him in her arms and whispered in his ear some of her choicest secrets. The grass rustled confidingly beside him, and shut out all the world. As he lay upon the ground he gazed straight into heaven, which seemed not far away, while the earth seemed to raise him slowly toward the sky, so bright and deeply blue, which in turn grew more near and clear, until all the heaven dissolved into a multitude of angel faces, beaming with love upon him, like the cherubs of Raphael's Sistine Madonna. His

heart seemed to expand with new and holy aspirations, and he rose, like Anteus, having gained strength from contact with mother earth and inspiration from the benignant heavens. In his after years he never quite forget those angel faces, beckoning him upward.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SILVER SHOE-BUCKLES.

THE favorite region of exploration for the children, when debarred from the fields, was the garret. This extended over the whole house. It had been left unfinished, and was a veritable California of treasures and wonders to the children. There was the lately discarded flax-spinner and carder, and the wool-spinning wheel, which was yet annually brought down to fill the house with its monotonous music, where the voice of its usurper, the piano, was then unheard in the land. Here were numerous remnants of lumber, which were turned to good account in their house-building operations. Here, also, was a large old green chest, which had been brought from New England, and, judging from its appearance, might have been brought from Old England in the *May-flower*

itself. It was filled with musty old papers and leather-covered books, which attracted little attention from the children, as they could turn them to no useful account except in house-building. But from them Phil later gleaned the entertaining travels of Mungo Park, and that famous old romance, "The Children of the Abbey." Here, one day, Phil and Nell made a discovery. Amid the rubbish in the old chest they found a pair of curious old shoes. They were too small for an adult and too large for a child, high-heeled, and turned up at the toe. Although so old they seemed very little worn. With them were a pair of silver shoe-buckles, which attracted their curiosity. On them they discovered the carved initials, M. M. Elated with this discovery, they hastened to show it to their parents.

"Why, children, where did you find them?" exclaimed grandmother, with more displeasure than they had ever seen her show. "These are sacred relics," said she, "which I

thought were carefully preserved; but nothing is sacred to children."

"But, grandma," Phil cried, "whose shoes are these. Were they your little boy's?"

"No, my child," said she, solemnly; "they were your great-great-aunt's."

"But how could she wear such little shoes if she was so great?" childishly inquired his sister.

"She was not old," she replied; "just eighteen the day she last wore those shoes. That was a memorable day, indeed," she mused, solemnly, seeming to forget their presence, "the day Mary Maclay was killed and a nation was born; the day of the battle of Saratoga. She was a beauty, the belle of the neighborhood, the pride of her family. So young, so fair, to meet so sad a death."

"Grandma, did you know her?" they exclaimed, noticing her apparent emotion. "And how was she killed?" they asked together.

"No, my children," she replied, "I never saw her, but have heard much as to her beauty,

her long black hair, her bright dark eyes, her joyous features, lighting all around, and her lithe, graceful figure, gentle as the fawn and quick as the darting swallow. I have so often heard the story of her beauty and her death, of which these shoes and buckles are a memento and heir-loom, that I have learned to love and reverence her memory"

"But how was she killed?" they again interrupted.

"She was killed by the Indians," said she, sadly.

At this word their interest was quickened, and they listened without another word to the story of Mary Maclay.

"In the troubled times of the Revolution nothing could send such a shudder around the fireside as the word 'Indians.' Great was the alarm of the inhabitants of the Mohawk Valley when, in the summer of 1777, the Indians were let loose again upon that beautiful land of farms, while Burgoyne came marching down by Lake Champlain with a

large army, which was intended to sever the united colonies at the Hudson, and make the dissevered numbers an easy conquest. Much greater was their alarm when it was known that the savages, with the dreaded Brant at their head, had besieged Fort Schuyler, and that General Herkimer, hastening to their rescue, had fallen into an ambuscade at Oriskany, and was himself slain, with nearly all his army. A few months later the horrors of war approached the home of Mary Maclay. She was engaged to be married to a gallant young neighbor. All the country was in arms, and flocking to the camp of Gates to repel the invaders. Mary's betrothed had enlisted, and before joining the ranks he wished the marriage to be performed, and Mary consented. On a bright and beautiful morning in autumn, the ever memorable 17th of October, 1777, Mary and a few friends started on horseback, as was the custom, for the rude village church where the simple ceremony was to be performed. All hearts partook of the joyousness of the

scene, and felt inspired by its beauty, for what is more beautiful or more inspiring in nature than an American forest in October? Laughing, and with many sounds of glee, among which Mary's was the gayest and happiest, the little party descended into a narrow valley, and began to ascend the opposite hill. Suddenly an unearthly scream seemed to burst from the earth, the sharp crack of rifles was heard, and Mary Maclay fell from her saddle. Yet the bewildered little party saw no enemy, for the Indians dared not show themselves, until one, more bold than the others, allured by Mary's wealth of raven hair, quick as a panther sprang forward and grasped it, while his scalping-knife gleamed in the air; but more quick was her lover's rifle, and the savage fell dead at their feet. The rest of the Indians fled, but their work was done. Beautiful Mary Maclay was dead. Slowly and sadly they bore her, not to the bridal altar, but to her sorrowing home. Next day came the news of the great victory of Saratoga, which was the turning-

point of the war for Independence. All the country was wild with joy, but the news fell upon dead hearts in that home. 'Talk not to me of a free country,' cried Mary's lover, pointing to the silent yet lovely form of his slain Mary. 'My country is there.' She was gone forever. Those shoes and buckles are dear to me, my children," concluded grandmother, with moist eyes. "They were worn by Mary Maclay on her sad wedding-day."

The children bore them reverently back to their place in the green chest, and ever after spoke of them only with secrecy and awe.

CHAPTER V.

THE DISTRICT SCHOOL.

THE "deestrict school," as the village public school was called, was held in a long, low building, which, from the many battlings it had received from youthful vandals, looked like an abandoned fort, in which the windows might well be taken for port-holes, and an occasional black hat stuck in a broken pane a frowning piece of artillery. Its position was certainly commanding, for it stood upon a barren rock, on the summit of a cliff, overlooking the village. Whether this site was selected by the village fathers in humble imitation of the Athenians, designing to place their temple of learning, like that of Minerva, on the Acropolis, is not certain; but it is noticeable that most country school-houses are placed in the bleakest and most barren situation, where land is the least

valuable. It cannot be said that this was the case in the selection of this site, for on it there was no land at all. This institution was founded on a rock, where it was likely to remain as long as the primitive granite on which it stood. How sad that dead buildings must decay above ground! Yet kind nature does her best to hide the unsightliness of dissolution, and with her vines and mosses strives to bury her dead out of her sight. Little feet, now still, have worn smooth the hard surface of the rock, and many a head has been almost broken by contact with it.

At the base of the Acropolis was a small grove, dedicated to the goddess of childhood—Sport. (Why has not some one given a name to the best of the immortals? Did not Greek and Roman children play?) Here the youngest boys and girls played "toss the handkerchief" or "school," while on the other side the more adventurous boys climbed the tall pine-trees, or chased each other over the rocks.

Phil Vernon set out for the district school

for the first time one beautiful morning in September, with a bright face and a light heart. The school of nature and the instructions of love had been the greatest pleasure of his life. Hence he believed that school must possess the same pleasures, and little imagined the sad change that lay in store for him. He reached the school-house before the school had opened, for the teacher had not yet arrived. But many of the pupils were there, already taking their first lesson in disorder. Some were sitting on the top of the benches, vigorously pounding them with their heels, and shouting at the top of their voices; others were playing tag over the benches and seats. Some of the larger boys had already selected the best seats for themselves, and were busy putting their mark upon them in bold letters with the ever-present jack-knife. One was seated in the teacher's chair, the only one in the room, and was violently ringing the bell and calling for order.

At the sight of little Phil several of the

boys began to shout "A new scholar," "My, aint he slick," "Put him in a band-box," and other cordial greetings, until the little stranger was almost ready to cry, when one of the large girls, who had been standing by the window looking curiously for the new teacher, took him by the hand, and, with a few kind words, led him to a seat on the girls' side of the room, at which some of the boys called out "Girl boy." But Phil was ignorant of the intended reproach, and it passed unheeded. At length the hubbub began to subside, and Phil quietly took a survey of the strange room in which he found himself. It had just received its annual cleaning. The floor and benches were still damp from the recent scrubbing. The walls wore a fresh coat of white-wash. There were a few new panes of glass in the windows, and a new panel in the door, repairing the breaches of the previous quarter. Otherwise there was no attempt at ornamentation or comfort. The huge stove stood in the center of the room, where it had stood all summer, a gloomy re-

minder of winter, like a great black tortoise which had crept up from the slimy depth, standing fixed on its four short legs and staring blankly into vacancy. The windows were purposely placed too high for outward vision, that the pupils' attention might not be distracted from their books to the glorious pageant of the autumnal trees without, waving their arms, as if beckoning the imprisoned school children to glad rambles and nuttings. The same old globe still stood on the teacher's desk, though it was never used except as a sort of sign to indicate that the instruction business was carried on at the old stand. On the walls hung the same old smoke-begrimed maps of the United States, as it was before the annexation of the Mexican territory, the whole of the territory west of the Mississippi being like chaos, unformed and void, while the outlines of the great lakes grimly represented an old woman, with Lake Superior for a bustle, bending over and picking up chips out of the St. Lawrence. At least that was all that Phil

could make out of it. At the other side hung an astronomical chart, representing the Ptolemaic theory of the universe, which some of the scholars had studied with greater diligence than the stated task in the geography; for, at the previous examination before the School Committee, one of the boys, being questioned as to what the earth rested on, replied, "On a big snake;" and being further questioned, "What does the snake rest on?" replied, "On a big turtle." "And what does the turtle stand on?" queried the puzzled committeeman, having caught the boy's glance at the chart, where the world and big snake were, indeed, resting on the turtle, which itself was spreading wide in space, like Noah's dove, finding no place for the sole of its foot. "Now, what does the turtle stand on?" repeated the teacher, severely, in reproof for the boy's not attending more closely to his instruction. "Stands on his feet," shouted the boy, triumphantly, and the great problem was solved.

But Phil's attention was now withdrawn

from the contemplation of the floating universe and the old lady with the large bustle, by a sudden and unwonted stillness in the room. The scholars immediately took their seats, removed their hats, and intently watched the door, whispering, "He is coming!" Soon at the open door appeared the form of the new teacher, as he was called, though he was new only as every teacher was new, there being a change every summer and winter, a lady being employed in the summer, and a "man teacher" in the winter. Solomon Smith was his name, or Sol Smith, as he was commonly known, though he rejected that appellation and called himself S. Pompey Smith, parting his name in the middle, in modern style. He entered with a solemn, awkward manner, intended to be the height of dignity, without a word of greeting or notice of the scholars, marched to the desk, carefully removed his tall beaver hat, borrowed for the occasion, examined it carefully, drew out a red silk handkerchief, brushed his hat, mopped his

face, rang the bell, and stiffly said, "The school will come to order!" though one might have heard a pin drop at the moment. Solomon Smith was a tall, angular young farmer, just from the harvest field, brown and bony and strong of limb, with a receding chin and forehead, and an enormous nose, which seemed to be the outpost of his physiognomy, from which his other features retreated in good order both ways. He was called a teacher because he had received from the school commissioner a certificate stating that in education and moral character he was qualified to teach a public school, though his attainments were of the meagerest and his moral character had not been inquired into.

"I thought I would teach school this winter," said Solomon to the committee, "as I could do nothing else to earn any thing, and I want to buy some cows in the spring." So they hired him.

"Cheaper than any other teacher, as he can board at home," said Deacon Dobson, one of

the trustees, "and I guess he is strong enough to keep order anyhow."

This was the teacher placed before these young minds, reaching out their hungry tentacles for food and love.

"Children," said Solomon, in his opening speech, as he squared himself pugnaciously before them, "school is open; I will have no nonsense here. The first one that breaks the rules will get thrashed, and if any one gives me any sars I may get mad and pitch him right out of the winder. So look out! First class in readin'!" There was a moment's pause, then a rush. All wanted to be in the first class. Some had read the same book a dozen times; others could scarcely read at all. But the new teacher knew nothing of the advancement of his pupils or the methods of his predecessor.

Thus the district school was begun, but the scholars had already taken the new teacher's measure more accurately than he had theirs, and were planning how to circumvent him. Phil was placed upon a front seat without a

back, too high for his feet to touch the floor, and where he soon became so weary that he could scarcely keep his seat. A book was put into his hands with long columns of words, and he was told to study his lessons. Wearily the day wore on as the scholars droned over the same old lessons, until a boy, bolder than the others, raised his hand and shouted, "School-master, migout?"

"The school may have a recess," said Solomon, with an expectoration of tobacco across the floor, "but mind you're all back when the bell rings or there'll be trouble."

With this benediction he dismissed them, girls and boys together. Out with the boys Phil was happy, and soon was taking lessons in the art of making pop-guns and trading jack-knives. Here, at least, all was free and natural. The lessons he learned out of school were more lasting and effective for good or evil than those within.

CHAPTER VI.

STOLEN APPLES.

NEAR the school-house was Deacon Morrow's orchard, in which hung some luscious pippins, the desire of every scholar. But the old man was too watchful and teacher's command too stern for the school-boys to venture after the forbidden fruit. There were many other orchards whose owners were less stingy, but in none such tempting fruit as in Deacon Morrow's. But, like the sleepless dragon of the Hesperides, he was always on the watch. The earliest urchin, as, half-awake, he started away in the morning with the cows, found the deacon hoeing in the garden, and long after all the tired little feet were at rest he was up and around his domain. He was a small, shriveled, gray-haired old man, in whose face a smile would have

been as strange as lightning in a wintry sky. One morning, as Phil was passing his orchard, he met Deacon Rider, so nicknamed from his solemn countenance, one of the bullies of the school, slyly coming out of the garden with his pockets full of the luscious pippins.

"Phil Vernon," said he, "if you tell on me I'll give you the biggest whaling you ever had in your life." Then, suddenly changing his air, he whined, "You wont tell, will you, and have me licked? Here, take some," and before Phil could speak he pushed a couple of the apples into his pocket and started for the school. Just then the bell rang and Phil saw Deacon Morrow coming around the fence as he ran into school.

All the morning he was in misery. Whenever he caught the eye of Deak Rider he shook his head at Phil in menace, and by signs gave him to understand that the "whaling" was in store for him if he should "peach."

The teacher had forbidden the scholars to bring any apples to school, and daily made

a round of inspection. In vain Phil tried to hide the pippins in his narrow pocket, which, like Banquo's ghost, would not down, but every moment or two would show their rosy cheeks above, as if blushing at their guilty position. When Phil's class was called he was asked if he had any apples in his pocket. He hung his head and said nothing. It was not necessary. There were two great pippins peeping out of the pockets of his roundabout, and telling their story with bold blushes. The teacher took them, and suspecting whence they came, asked him where he had got them. He dared not tell, and still hung his head in silence, while the big tears rolled down his cheeks. The teacher placed the apples upon his desk, said he would make further inquiries. He then asked if any others had apples, which all denied, none more stoutly than Deak Rider. But denial did not avail this time. As he strove to hide his stolen apples in his desk one fell upon the floor and rolled to the teacher's feet. He picked it up and ordered

the offender to come forward. With an air of conscious innocence and wonder Deak Rider faced the master. When examination showed that many more were concealed in his desk, and the pippins were brought before him, he showed no trace of confusion or shame.

"Now," demanded the teacher, "where did you get these apples?"

"Willy Welch gave them to me," he answered, promptly and frankly, as if now the truth was out, he was determined to make a clear breast of it. Phil was thunder-struck, not less than innocent and astonished Willy, who denied that he knew any thing about the apples, or that he had seen Deak Rider until he came into school.

"Hear him lie!" shouted Deak. "I saw him coming out of Deacon Morrow's orchard with the apples, and I can prove it. Phil Vernon saw him, too, and he gave us both some if we would not tell."

Instantly the appeal was made to Phil, whose word was never doubted in the school.

"Now, who took the apples?" asked the teacher, sternly, while Phil stood silent and afraid.

"Willy Welch took them, didn't he, Phil?" cried Deak Rider, fixing upon him his sinister eye full of the threats of the morning.

Confused and terrified, Phil faltered, "Yes."

"That settles it," declared the teacher. "Boys, take your seats. Willy Welch, come here; you shall receive the punishment due for both stealing and lying."

Willy came without a word, while Phil sat trembling and trying to comprehend this strange turn of affairs. Willy was a frank, mischievous boy, who was usually engaged in school-boy tricks and troubles, so that it was not thought strange that he should have taken the apples. Once Willy attempted to speak, but was not permitted by the teacher, who, amid breathless silence, in his most stern manner, described the offenses of theft and falsehood and the punishment due to such an aggravated case of depravity. In the midst of

the harangue a loud knock was heard at the door, and in walked Deacon Morrow. Instantly his eye fell upon the pippins on the desk, and, turning to the school, he demanded who had stolen his apples.

"There stands the culprit," said the teacher, pointing to Willy, who looked up with a clear, open countenance of denial.

"No," said Deacon Morrow, "he is not the one. I saw him; it was a much larger boy, but I don't know his name," and he carefully looked around the room amid profound silence. Soon his eye fell upon Phil. "That boy knows," said he, pointing to Phil, "he came by just as the thief was climbing the fence."

"Yes," said the teacher, "and he says it was Willy Welch, and his word can be depended upon. I have never known him to tell a lie."

Deacon Morrow was confused, but Phil's feelings were indescribable. Every thing swam before him; he began to realize that he had told a lie, the one thing he dreaded and despised above all things. The school-room

and scholars seemed to disappear, and he saw nothing but a black-robed judge, and himself standing alone before him while he pronounced the awful words, "a liar!" He gasped for breath, and with great effort cried out:

"No! I am a liar! Deak Rider took them, and gave me some."

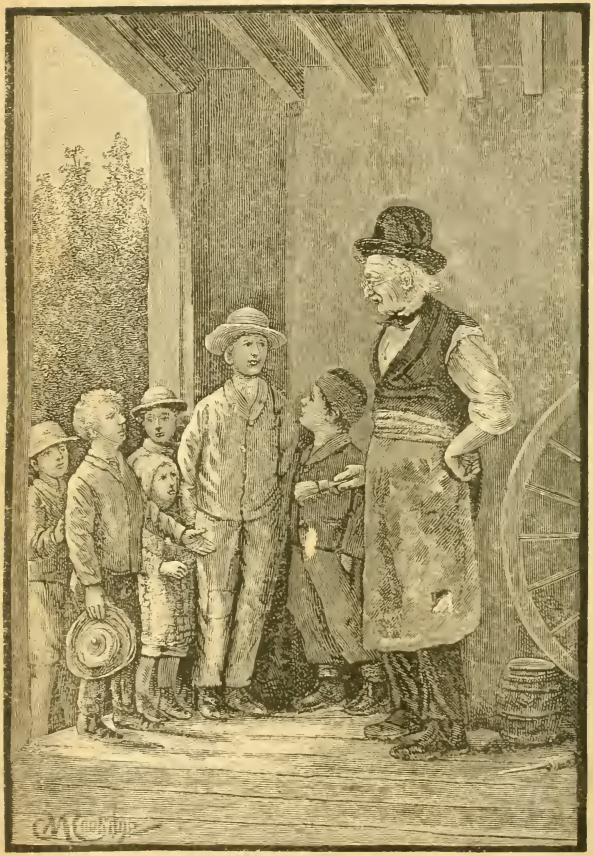
For once the bully was silent. He showed no shame, but cast a revengeful look at Phil, which was no longer feared. Then came punishment. Phil's had been greater than any that could be inflicted now. But the teacher did not know that, nor seek to learn the cause of his strange conduct. He decided that both boys should be punished alike. Phil was tied hand to hand with Deak Rider, and placed in the center of the room. The rope was wound about their hands and feet until they could not move. There they stood like two statues, the one marked "thief," the other "liar." Phil's companion appeared indifferent and sullen; but Phil was crushed. He was un-

conscious of any thing but the label upon his breast, which seemed to burn into his heart and flash into the eyes of all the world. The school routine went on, but he took no notice of what occurred around him. Again all seemed to grow dim about him and he became unconscious. He had fainted. When he recovered he was at home. It was night; his mother was bending tenderly over him, and said he had been taken ill at school. Dimly the recollections of the day's events came over him, and he hid his face from her sight. He felt unfit to be in her presence, and could not tell her the story of his fall.

Years gradually dulled the painful memory; but he never forgot the dearly-bought lesson. Yet it was worth the cost; for he acquired the greatest abhorrence of falsehood and shams in every form, which remained with him all his life.

The reign of "Solomon the Great," as the scholars called him, was, to use his

own expression, "brief but short." After having severely injured several of the scholars in his fits of anger, and used profane language until it became notorious, he was compelled to exchange teaching for farming, and returned to his farm and the congenial society of his cows.



A Case in Court. Chap. VII.

CHAPTER VII.

A CASE IN COURT.

PHIL counted himself an unusually lucky boy one day by finding a jack-knife; for his luck ordinarily ran in the line of losing them. But fate had not forgotten him, and in the midst of his rejoicings appeared, in the shape of Bully Bill, the terror of the village. He asked to see the knife, and after examining it, declared that he had lost that knife more than a year before, and coolly put it into his pocket. Phil was indignant, and insisted that it was his by right of discovery, and called upon the boys who were with him as witnesses.

He had learned in his history of the colonization of America that, besides the rights of discovery and purchase, there was also the so-called right of conquest. This lesson now

found practical illustration, for Bully Bill insisted upon the right of possession, and made a claim to support it, which was about as good as those by which the natives of America were defrauded of their property. Besides he had the advantage of strength, and might has made right many times before and since. But Phil could not see it, and loudly demanded his knife, and was as loudly supported by his friends. Others coming up, the appeal was made to each in turn as to the rightful ownership of the discovered article. Phil had the best claim, and a majority in his favor; but Bill had the knife. Consequently he cared little for the arguments.

With each new-comer the discussion waxed louder and more earnest, one ingenious young lawyer arguing that it was more than probable that said knife, belonged to Phil, as it was found opposite his house. This so sharpened Phil's memory that he recollected losing a knife the year before, as he, indeed, had lost several every year.

The case was clearly Phil's, yet possession in this instance was more than nine points of the law, for still his opponent had the knife. He was as far from getting possession of his property as at first, when one boy, by a sudden inspiration of genius, suggested that they take the case into court before the justice of the peace. This proposition was met with a shout of assent, and no sooner agreed upon than done. Off they started on the run for Squire Cornwall's office. By chance they met the justice on the street near his office, and demanded a hearing then and there. This was Phil's first experience with courts of justice, and naturally he felt great diffidence. But he was pushed into the middle of the ring around the surprised justice to tell his story. With tearful eyes and trembling tones he pleaded his cause as best he could, with more earnestness, if less eloquence, than was often heard in that court, relating the finding of the knife, and calling on his witnesses to prove his story. Eagerly he scanned the face of the judge for

a trace of conviction as he claimed his rights. Meantime Bully Bill stood defiantly, with his hands in his pockets, still holding possession of the disputed property and declaring that it was his. There was, perhaps, an informality about the proceedings which the old squire did not approve, or possibly, he did not consider the affair of sufficient importance; for, with an amused smile, he shook his head and dismissed the case.

Phil was astounded that, with a case so clearly in his favor, he should not have an immediate decision in a court of law.

"No justice here," shouted his friends. "Let's go to Squire Huntington." And, with shout of dissatisfaction and contempt for that court, they all rushed off to the other justice. Never was a case transferred from one court to another with greater speed and less formality. Squire Huntington combined with the administration of justice the occupation of painter, and was deeply absorbed in putting the last touches upon a wagon-wheel in his quiet shop,

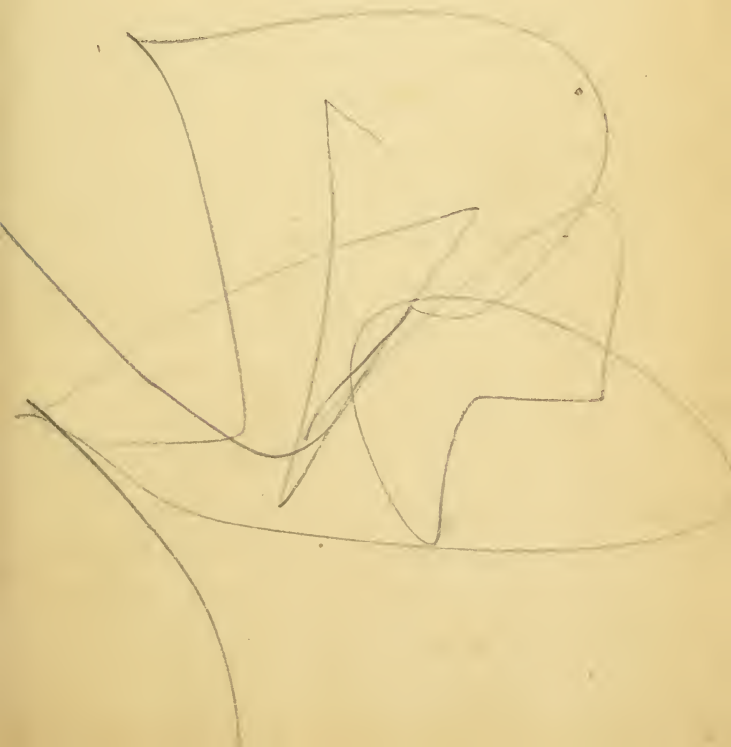
when he was aroused by the confused sounds of many voices coming up the street. Soon gathered about his door the disorderly crowd of young clients clamoring for justice. With a curious expression of inquiring surprise, the kind old man came to the door in his apron, paint-brush in hand and spectacles on his nose, to learn the cause of the strange commotion. Again the case was described, as, each his own lawyer, they went over it again with renewed earnestness and volubility; while the more they argued the more the old squire seemed to be undecided. So he tried persuasion. But that had no effect upon the mind of Bully Bill. Then the justice asked to see the knife; and after carefully examining it, and turning it over and over, finally decided that Phil ought to have it, as he was the smaller boy. This decision did not quite satisfy Phil, as it left the right of the question still undecided; but it was met with a shout of approbation. Still the knife was not in his hands, and the court was about to adjourn, leaving him as far as

ever from obtaining his property, when the squire's son, having received the knife from his father, and being better acquainted with boys' administration of justice, quietly slipped it into Phil's hands and whispered, "Scoot." He quickly took the hint and the knife, and slipped out of the crowd and "scooted." He was instantly followed by Bully Bill in close pursuit, and the whole crowd of boys came cheering and shouting on behind.

Luckily Phil had not far to go, and desperation put such speed into his legs that he managed to keep out of the reach of his pursuer. Still his strength was failing as he neared the garden gate, which was tied with a string. He had no time to unfasten it, and Bully Bill's long arms were about to lay hold of him when, with a sudden resolution, he dashed between the gate and the post, and was safe inside the fence. His small size was for once an advantage. Before Bill could undo the latch or climb the fence Phil was in the house with the jack-knife.

It was not much of a knife, after all, but his mother greased the rusty joints, and he took a delight in the humble tool, only equaled by his trouble and pains in obtaining it.

But this was his last as well as his first experience in a court of law and equity.



CHAPTER VIII.

ROBINSON CRUSOE.

THE place Phil delighted to visit above all others was "Aunt Betsey's." She lived on a farm down the river in a new part of the country called the English settlement. She was a "California widow," her husband having caught the gold fever, and gone to the "diggins" to rock a cradle for the shining dust. She had already rocked nine filled with something better, and with her stalwart boys and girls was working her rocky farm alone. They lived in a log-house on the hill, with a frame "addition" built on as a parlor, while the children slept in the log-house chamber partitioned off into rooms by blankets. No mansion was so full of delights to Phil as that log-house, for here he was the honored guest, and the best it afforded was his. Many were

the lumps of maple sugar and cakes of gingerbread which Aunt Betsey produced for him out of the red cupboard, and never was he happier than when gathered with the boys and girls around the big fire-place, cracking nuts and popping corn and guessing riddles. And when he crept up the ladder-like stairs to bed, he could lie and look through the cracks in the roof and see the stars winking him to sleep, and cared nothing for the snow that might sift through upon the thick blankets.

The nearest neighbors were Aunt Hannah, or Honner, as she was called, and Uncle Joe. She had a peculiar habit of squinting with her eye and scratching her ear, which made Phil think she was winking at him. One of the neighbor's girls, named Safronia Migs, was very cross-eyed, and when they were both at Aunt Betsey's, Phil felt, between the glances of them both, that he was an object of marked attention, which so embarrassed him that he was glad to seek refuge in a corner of the fireplace. When he first saw the cross-eyed girl,

he told his mother he had seen a girl who broke her eye, for it was crooked. Phil's grand passion was to visit Aunt Betsey's in sugaring, and to go with the boys to the "sugar-bush," and help boil down sap and "sugar off," as it was called, when the sweet syrup was thick enough to crystallize into sugar and make delicious wax on snow. Like many boys, Phil was also an omnivorous reader, and was divided between his fondness for books and for out-door sports. This dilemma was unusually great at Aunt Betsey's, for there he found an old copy of "Pilgrim's Progress" and of "Robinson Crusoe." Both were alike real and attractive to him, and he was equally fascinated with the account of Christian's fight with Apollyon and Robinson's conflict with the cannibals.

In the midst of the enticements of the latter came the announcement, that the boys were going to remain in the woods all night to sugar off. Phil was up in an instant to accompany them, but Aunt Betsey feared to have her

charge exposed to any danger. But by the entreaties of the boys and Phil's promise to be very careful and stay with them that he might not get lost, she was persuaded to permit Phil to go with them. Down went "Robinson Crusoe," and Phil went off to the sugar-bush with the boys, provided with blankets and lunch, and Phil with his pockets full of cookies, secretly smuggled in by Aunt Betsey, for an emergency. They reached the sugar-camp before night, which was more than a mile from the house, where the bright fire was burning and the great pan steaming before the rude cabin, where some straw and blankets formed their bed for the night. Here they sat and watched the fire and laughed and shouted and told stories until dark, when, as the shadows deepened, their voices grew louder to keep up their spirits. Phil anxiously watched the syrup, and frequently tried it to see if it would "feather" so as to make wax, and was much disappointed when he was told that it would take several hours longer. Then the oldest

boy, Deck, said he must go to gather sap, as some of the buckets were running over, and the other boys went with him, leaving Phil alone in the cabin. He was not a timid boy, but he had an active imagination, and as the shadows rose and fell from the fire, grim shapes seemed to come out of the darkness to look at him while he watched the waving branches, and listened to the faint sighing of the leaves begging the disturbing winds for rest. The sounds of the forest suggested to his mind the fearful thought of wolves and bears. Then he thought of the bright fireside and his beloved book, and wished himself back in Aunt Betsey's cheerful room. He became suddenly forgetful of his own case and could think of nothing but the adventures of Crusoe, until it seemed that he could not wait until morning to take them up again. Then he determined not to wait, but to hasten back to the house before it should become darker. He remembered that it was not far out of the woods, then it would be lighter, and there was

a wagon-road the remainder of the way. So, hastily putting on his wrappings, for the night was chilly and the snow still lay on the ground in places, he started for home.

He remembered that the path ran to the brook, then by a ledge to the fence into the open field, and he ran boldly forward, not daring to look behind after he left the fire, but peering anxiously through the darkness for the bridge over the brook. He ran faster and faster, but still did not see or hear the brook, while the path became more obstructed with logs and stones. Still he stumbled on, confident that he must be in the right path, and that each moment he should hear the brook, until he came to a high brush fence directly across his path, beyond which he could see no trace of it, while the trees stood close and tall around him, and the darkness enveloped him. Then a chill went through him, as he feared that he had missed the right path and was lost in the woods at night. Tears almost came to his eyes, but he bravely clenched

his hands and turned back. But now he could not distinguish the path, and he knew he was lost. Long and tediously he walked, and climbed and fell over the brush and logs, resolved that he would not give up, until after an hour or more he found himself back by the same brush fence. Then he remembered how bewildered travelers often go in a circle, and he knew that further walking was useless. He had heard how lost woodsmen find their way by feeling of the trees, knowing that more moss grows on the north side. He could also tell the north star by the pointer in the dipper, but, as he did not know in what direction the sugar camp was, the north star could not help him. He realized that he must spend the night in the woods alone. Then he thought of his castaway hero, and determined, like him, to make the best of his circumstances. True, he had no goats or man Friday, but he had on warm clothes, with a good supply of provision, thanks to Aunt Betsey's partiality, though the tears almost came again when he thought of

her kindness and his broken promise. But as tears and penitence were of no avail, he began to think how he should pass the night. Near by he had noticed an overhanging rock, under which the brush was dry. He had learned that a "shake-down" of hemlock branches made a very comfortable bed. So he broke off some branches and took them into his cave, as he called it, now beginning to feel himself a humble imitator of his hero, and to be encouraged by his efforts. But when he lay down and began to think of this position, and of the long hours before daylight, the cold chills began to creep over him again. He was really cold, and began to fear that he would freeze before morning if nothing worse should befall him. Then a thought struck him, and he began vigorously to search in his pockets. First came the cookies, then his handkerchief, then a bunch of string, a jack-knife, a basswood whistle, a jew's-harp, a bird's egg, a lump of sugar, two fish-hooks, a bit of lead, two nails, and—yes, there was surely one—a match! He

had read that a fire was the best protection against wild beasts, and now he felt safer at the prospect of having one. Eagerly he searched for some dry leaves, while his teeth chattered and his hands trembled with the cold, for he would not admit that he was afraid. Then he whittled some shavings from a dry stick, and anxiously struck his match. Slowly the dim blue light started, the dry leaves caught, and soon he had a cheerful blaze. More sticks and brush were found near, and now Phil felt no longer alone, and his courage rose with his fire. But no wolves or bears appeared, and nothing more dreadful than the shapes he saw in the shadows. All the long night he sat and watched his fire, for he dared not let it go out, though he often nodded before it. Once or twice he heard faint halloos, which he answered as loud as he could, though he did not know whether it was the owls or his friends trying to find him.

In fact, they were in greater distress then he. On missing him, one of the boys had run home,

and, not finding him there, alarmed Aunt Betsey, and soon had the whole neighborhood out looking for the lost boy, while the stentorian tones of the oldest son sounded over the fields and woods, calling, "Have you found the boy?"

At last Phil awoke after a longer "nod," and perceived faint streaks of gray in the darkness, while, as he strained his eyes to peer among the trees, they slowly began to stand out from each other, and he to feel that renewal of confidence which comes with the daylight. Then he gave a parting look at his fire and his cave, in which he felt now much at home, and, starting from the brush fence, began to retrace his steps. Soon he came upon the path to the sugar camp, and was surprised to see how plain it was by day. He felt humiliated when he remembered his vain confidence of the night before, and resolved not to trust too much to his own knowledge in future. Emerging from the woods, he soon saw a man, who ran toward him, shouting, "We have found the boy!" which was taken up in differ-

ent directions, until it seemed to Phil that the whole community had come out that spring morning to welcome him.

He did not realize the trouble he had caused until he saw his oldest cousin, with his anxious looks, tired and hoarse from shouting and his search of nearly all the night, for he had felt his responsibility for taking Phil into the woods, and could not be induced to give up the search until morning. Aunt Betsey received the lost boy with tears of joy, and did not think to chide him for his disobedience. Phil felt more sorrow than at his own mishaps when he saw how much he had caused to those who loved him.

"What possessed you to start for home alone?" asked cousin Deck.

"I wanted to finish Robinson Crusoe," Phil replied.

"And you were making a Robinson Crusoe of yourself all the time," said Deck.

Phil heard not the last of it for many months, and was called Robinson Crusoe by his cousins long after.

CHAPTER IX.

GRANDMOTHER'S STORY.

PHIL could hardly realize that his grandmother had ever been young and strong, though she had often assured him that such was the fact. He had often asked her to tell the story of her life, but when he did so, a sad, far-away look would come over her face, and she would evade his request. There had been a deep and hidden sorrow in her life of which she seldom spoke. But one memorable afternoon, soon after Phil's return from Aunt Betsey's, she called him and Nell to her room and related her story.

"I was born in the State of Connecticut," she said, "in a small village on the banks of the beautiful 'Long River,' not far from the spot where the noted Lady Fenwick lies buried. Here I grew up in careless, happy

girlhood, joyous as a bird, singing from morning till night, for the same reason, because I could not help it. Birdie I was called in our household, partly on account of this disposition, and partly for my youthful grace and vivacity. As I grew older I was called a 'pretty girl,' and gradually I came to believe that I was the belle of the village. From these flatteries and my own impressible nature, a feeling of vanity took possession of me. I had many friends, among whom the earliest favorite was the son of a neighbor, a plain, frank, noble youth, whom at that time I did not appreciate. We had been schoolmates and sat side by side in our class, where I had saved him many a failure, and for which I was rewarded with a ride home on his sled after school. Thus had we grown up together, and I liked him as much as I was then capable of loving any one.

"There was also a young student from Yale College, who had come to our village to teach school during the winter. He was

prepossessing in appearance, of cultivated manners, and brilliant intellect. He taught our school with great success. He ingratiated himself into the good-will of every family into which he was introduced, and became the admiration of the village girls. Among claimants for his attentions I became the favorite. I was fascinated by his brilliant mind and polished manners. Yet there was often a cynical smile or half-suppressed sneer in his conversation which left upon me an unpleasant and dissatisfied feeling, while, like one intoxicated, I sought to allay it by renewed draughts of the poisonous stimulant. I lost my interest in all other society and neglected my old friend. Theodore Carleton was an infidel and often shocked me by his remarks. At times, when speaking of the wrongs he had suffered from his fellow-men, I caught a gleam in his fiery black eye which frightened me; but he avowed such affection for me, and declared such undying animosity against any one who should deceive him, that when he

asked me to marry him I could not refrain. But when he asked me to leave my father's house and wed him secretly, my eyes were opened and I refused. I saw him but once after. It was in a crowded assemblage, when, unexpectedly, I caught sight of his baleful eye fixed upon me in a glare of hatred such as I have never seen in a human being. He soon after had trouble in his school and left our village, taking with him my portrait. I was humbled, my vanity was all gone. I had learned that beauty and brilliancy of mind were no basis for happiness.

"Two years later my old friend, George Vernon, and I were married. The first four years of our wedded life passed happily and swiftly by, then came the sorrow that has darkened all my life and placed me upon this bed of suffering. We had a bright, dear little boy named Harry. When he was nearly four years old we started on a journey to New York, which in those days was accomplished in a sailing vessel. On a summer afternoon

we slowly sailed down the beautiful Connecticut, and toward night-fall emerged into Long Island Sound. It was a clear, moonlight evening, and as the wind gradually died down, we sat upon the narrow deck in pleasant contemplation of the quiet scene, watching the glistening pathway of the moon across the tops of the salty waves, and the sudden plunge of the porpoises making little islands of light amid the water, which as quickly sank out of sight.

"Among our fellow-passengers was a tall, old man, with long white hair and beard and keen black eyes, who seemed to take a kindly interest in us, and especially in little Harry. He was from New York he said, and had been visiting some friends in Hartford. While we sat conversing, the moon sank behind a bank of clouds, and night come on.

"'Mamma,' said Harry, after we had bidden our friends good-night, 'I don't like that man, he looks so sharp at me; but he gave me some candy, and said he would give me lots of toys when we get to New York.' Late in the

night I awoke with a strange, stifling sensation, and rising, looked out of the narrow window. The vessel appeared to be moored beside a wall. It was the fog which had risen during the night, and was so dense as to obscure all objects more than a foot from the boat. Suddenly a gleam of light shot out into the fog before me, and the cry of fire was heard. I aroused my companions and hastened on deck. All was confusion and disorder. The sailors, instead of trying to extinguish the flames, were hastening to lower the boats, and I was told that our only safety was in getting into one, as the water was calm, and the land not far distant. Amid all the confusion our old friend appeared, the only calm person on board.

"'Mrs. Vernon,' said he, assuringly, 'there is no danger; let me help you into the boat.' He stepped over into the boat, reached out for Harry, who was handed into it, and I was about to follow, when suddenly the boat was pushed off, and I was left upon the vessel

with my husband and many others. Instantly a feeling of great horror came over me, and as I saw Harry separated from me I gave an agonized scream and leaped into the sea after him. The water closed over me.

"'Harry, Harry!' I gasped, and sank. When I came to consciousness I was in a boat with my husband, and the wall of fog all about us. 'Harry, where is Harry?' I cried. 'Safe in the other boat,' answered a sailor, trying to re-assure me. 'It is nearly morning, and we shall soon all be safe ashore.'

"So we sat and waited for the light, while I shivered and sobbed and called for Harry. It was nearly ten o'clock before we could see our course, and then we were slowly rowed to the shore. But we saw nothing of the other boat, and the sailors assured us that it must have landed on the Long Island shore. We, with difficulty, made our way to a farm-house, where we were kindly cared for; but no care could calm me until I knew the fate of my little boy. As soon as possible we

procured a carriage and started for New York. But my exposure had proved too much for my strength. I felt fever coming on and became delirious. In my visions I saw Harry in the arms of that strange old man, whose features assumed a ghastly likeness to Theodore Carleton, and my child reaching out his arms and crying 'Mamma! mamma!' I rushed to embrace him, when the black fog wall shut down between us, and I sank again into the dark, cold waters.

"After many weeks I emerged from the valley of death, but only to enter upon the more dismal shades and sorrows of life. 'Harry, Harry?' I asked, as soon as I could speak. My friends attempted to comfort me, but in George's haggard face I saw no hope. He had made many anxious inquiries as to the missing boat, and ascertained that there had been only the old man and Harry in it with one sailor. The boat was found upturned upon the Long Island shore, but no trace of its occupants could be found. George was told that the boat must

have capsized and all been drowned. Week after week, month after month, passed by, and brought no news of Harry, or of the other occupants of the boat. Altogether it seemed strange that the boat should have been overturned in the calm waters and all lost, including the sailor, who, we afterward learned, was a suspicious character. Although there was a mystery about the old man, whom no one had seen before or since the disaster, yet the conviction gradually forced itself upon us that little Harry was asleep beneath the briny waters of the Sound. Day after day, hoping against hope, I refused to believe it, and cried out for my idol. Yet I turned with relief to this conclusion from the other more dreadful thought, that my darling had been stolen from my arms by an unknown enemy. Shudderingly I recalled the vision of my delusion. Once, only, did I suggest it to my husband. He was greatly shocked at the thought, and strove to divert my mind from the dreadful theme. I could have laid my child beneath

the green sod, which I could water with my tears and deck with flowers, but to think of him lying beneath the cold, shifting mounds of the sea, whose tomb no eye can visit, this was a greater grief. I would grasp at the idea that he might be alive, and yet, with shuddering, think of my boy in strange, perhaps cruel, hands, crying and dying for his mother; or as time passed on, forgetting her, and, perhaps, taught to call another by that only name. I would have been glad to be certain that he was dead. Yet I clung to the hope of seeing him again. At every unusual sound I started to hear again his pattering feet. For years I scanned the papers to see if a boy were found, and read with secret envy of mothers who had laid their little ones at rest beside them.

"Years passed on, and Time, the great cicatrizer, closed up the wounds he could not heal. Other children came to us, but there were no more idols in our house. My health never recovered from the shock it had received, and after a few years I became a confirmed

invalid. [illegible] l to see my husband, after a long and [illegible] life, expire beside me, and my childre[illegible] ey had grown to manhood, one by one [illegible] v, all but your father, my darlings. The[illegible] many years, I came with him to this ne[illegible] "

"And little H[illegible] became of him?" they asked.

"My children, I [illegible] ," replied their grandmother. "But h[illegible] le Harry now. If alive he would be a [illegible], like your father. But you much re[illegible] Philip," she concluded, looking ten[illegible] n him. "He had brown hair and blue [illegible] ours, and a very gentle and affectiona[illegible] sposition."

The distant look came again into her eyes, while an expression of great tenderness overspread her aged face, as she lived again, in memory, the days when her long-lost babe slumbered upon her breast.

CHAPTER X.

THE OLD SCHOOL-MASTER.

WHAT Phil learned at the district school he soon forgot, but what he experienced there was never forgotten. The reign of Solomon Smith was followed by that of Theophilus Cartwright. He was an old man, who, to all appearances, had always been old. The battered old building and the gray old master came in time to be naturally associated together. He seemed to be a part of the place, and the building an habiliment of him as much as his spectacles and old broad-brimmed hat, under which his long gray hair fell upon his broad shoulders.

The old man had suddenly appeared in the village one dark, stormy night, from whence or for what purpose no one knew. After making some inquiries in regard to the village

and its inhabitants, he applied for the position of school teacher. He easily obtained it, for none of the other applicants could compare with him in scholarship.

The Presbyterian minister, the only well-educated man in the place, declared that he ought to be in the ministry instead of the village school. But there was always a strange reserve about him which made him an object of curiosity to the villagers, and there remained a mystery in regard to him which gossip could not solve. He lived alone, in a remote part of the village, in a room which was said to be filled with rare old books and strange instruments, whose use no one could tell. Some suspected him of some crime, others feared him, but no one knew him.

In his school he was a disciplinarian of the old type, though generally just when all went well. A frown from his fierce eye was sufficient to quell any ordinary disorder, and when he spoke in anger, the boldest quailed before his lion voice. Phil he treated with a

capricious kindness and severity which were very trying to him, as he never knew how to please his teacher. Writing was an art in which Phil did not excel. The copies were commonly written in Mr. Cartwright's bold hand, and were such proverbs as "Make hay while the sun shines," and "Honesty is the best policy." One day the copy was one of Pope's sophisms, "Whatever is, is right." After Phil had copied it half down the page, he fell to thinking of it. Children do, sometimes, think, though the tasks of memorizing given them, and the parrot-like recitations required, are the least adapted to the development of that faculty. But this time he read and re-read the words:

"'Whatever is, is right.' How can that be?" he asked. "I see many things which are not right. Lying and theft are not right."

When he went home he took the copy-book to his grandmother, the solver of all problems, and laid it upon her lap.

"'Whatever is, is right.' How can that

be?" he asked. "Was it right for Bully Bill to push me down in the mud yesterday, or for Deak Rider to lie as he did?"

"No, my dear," she replied, "wrong-doing can never be right. Bring me a pen. I will set you a copy to study and practice."

Then, with a bold stroke, she drew it through the master's copy, and wrote underneath, in a fine, delicate, slightly trembling hand: "Love your enemies, and do good to those who despitefully use you."

Phil took the book back to school, and the next day was busily engaged writing the new copy, when he felt an evil presence near, and turning, saw the master looking over his shoulder, his eyes flashing fire as they burned upon the lines traced in the delicate hand of Phil's grandmother. Placing his broad hand upon the two copies, he demanded:

"Whose work is this?"

"My grandmother's," Phil answered.

"Your grandmother's!" he shouted, in tones of uncontrollable anger, while his eyes seemed

to burn with rage. "What right has she to interfere with my work? Does she dare to oppose and insult me still?"

Phil's spirits, which had forsaken him at the first words, gradually returned to the defense of his grandmother, and turning to the enraged master a look as fearless as his own, answered:

"My grandmother thought it not best for me to have that copy, and set me a better one."

"Does your grandmother think to instruct me?" he hissed in Phil's ear, still clasping the book as if he would tear out the writing.

"She knows what is right better than you do," Phil replied, with a sudden access of courage which he never could have summoned up in his own defense, but which was now aroused by his love and reverence for his grandmother.

At these words the teacher, suddenly dropping the book as if it had been a flame, seized Phil by the arm with a grip which

gave him acute pain, though he would not cry out, and quickly thrust him into a dark closet and locked the door. Phil sank upon the floor, too much terrified to think or realize what had passed. How long he lay there he did not know, but at length he rose up and attempted to reflect upon the occurrence. The more he thought of the affair the less he could see that he had done or said any thing wrong, and the more the injustice of the master's conduct grew upon him. It was not the punishment or even the disgrace that stung him so much as the insult to his grandmother. The more he thought upon this the deeper he felt the sense of injury, and gradual swelling of anger seemed almost to choke him.

He beat upon the wall in his anger until the skin was bruised from his hands, and he felt as if he hated every body, and that there was no right in the world. Then suddenly a faint light seemed to illumine the room and he saw before him the copy-book. The mas-

ter's copy and his own writing had disappeared, and there was only the pure white page and on it in letters of light, in his grandmother's delicate handwriting: "Love your enemies, and do good to those who despitefully use you."

He read and reread them until all angry feelings vanished, and he was at peace again. He forgave the master all his unkindness, and even felt that he could love him. Now he wanted to be free that he might tell him so. He listened. The schoolroom had an unwonted quiet, the pupils daring to speak only in a whisper, and the teacher's voice seeming even yet to be unsteady and husky in its tones as he went through the usual lessons. Anxiously Phil waited for the hour of release. Slowly the moments and hours dragged along, broken only by the buzzing monotones of the scholars and the few deep-toned words of the master.

Without he could occasionally hear the

chirp of birds. It seemed ages since he stopped to listen to them on his way to school that morning. One after another the morning lessons were recited. Finally all were over, and the scholars dismissed for their noon's recess. Quietly they went out, without the usual shout and cheer of school-boys.

Now he surely expected release. He heard the master's heavy step as he walked up and down the room, and at last stopped before the closet door. There was a moment of silence. Phil would not ask for release. A moment more the master stood there, while Phil listened for the key to turn, then he passed by. Up and down, up and down, he heard him pass, and occasionally stop before the door as if listening or waiting a word from Phil. But he gave none, determined, like Paul in prison, that the jailer should come and fetch him out. The hour of recess passed, and no release. He heard the scholars come in again and resume their lessons. He was

faint from want of food, burning with thirst from the excitement, yet there he must stay. Wearily the heavy hours of the afternoon dragged along. It seemed weeks that he had been imprisoned. He gave up all hope, and sat upon the floor, while a raging pain throbbed in his brain and he lost all sense of time and place. Again he knew by the stillness that the children had gone. He perceived, by an occasional rustle of paper, that the master was still at his desk. Hours must have passed, for by the few sounds from without he knew it was near evening. The master rose, took his key, and opened the door. There he stood before Phil, with a look upon his face as if still full of warring passions. A moment he looked down upon Phil in silence; then, as if in a sudden access of anger, he hissed:

"Am I always to be thwarted by her?" then closed the door, locked it, and left the room.

It was night and all was still. How many

hours passed Phil did not know. At length he was roused by a gleam of light. He heard voices. The door was thrown open, and there stood his father and the school-master. His father clasped him in his arms, while the master seemed to tremble with fear. Phil was at once taken home and cared for, but it was long before he recovered from the shock and pain of the long confinement.

The effect of this occurrence, when it became known, was to arouse a strong feeling of indignation against the teacher, and the trustees decided to discharge him at the end of the year. This was a great blow to the old man. He clung to the position with great tenacity, and seemed strangely bound to the place. At last he came to Phil's father and begged him to forgive him His father called a family meeting, and referred the question to grandmother, who had sat silent during the discussion. Then she turned and, looking at Phil, said:

"Do good to those who despitefully use you! What do you say, Philip?"

"Love your enemies," he replied. "I am sure I forgive Mr. Cartwright; but he is not my enemy now."

"Love has no enemies," said grandmother, quietly.

So Mr. Cartwright remained, but Phil attended the district school no longer.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FRIENDS.

WHEN Phil was out of school his time hung heavy on his hands, as he had no companions of his own age. Hence he was glad to learn that a new Methodist minister was coming. Anxiously he inquired if there were any boys in the family, and was told that when the minister was formerly stationed in the village he had two daughters.

"Only girls!" exclaimed Phil, with disappointment. But his mother informed him that, as that was twenty years before, the minister might have several boys by this time. At which Phil's hopes rose again. At last the minister arrived, with wagons and baggage, children and babies, like the gypsies themselves. Phil did not see them arrive, but was told that several strange boys had been seen

about town, and he immediately set out to find one. He carefully inspected the house, but not one was to be seen there. Finally he learned that a strange boy had been seen going toward the river, fish-pole in hand. Phil followed, and soon found him on a log, like a native frog, waiting patiently for a bite. Here was a touch of nature that made them kin. Phil knew that the stranger was in the wrong place to catch fish, and made this the basis of his introduction. Phil seated himself upon a neighboring bank, and the strangers eyed each other for some time, when the following conversation took place:

Phil. "Hello!"

Stranger. "Hello yourself!"

Phil. "Caught any thing?"

Stranger. "Yes."

Phil. "What?"

Stranger. "Snags."

Phil. "That isn't a good place to fish."

Stranger. "I know that; tell me something new."

Phil. "I'll tell you a better place to fish."

Stranger. "Why don't you, then?"

Phil. "What's your name?"

Stranger. What's yours?"

Phil. "Phil Vernon. What's yours?"

Stranger. "Jack Sheppard."

Phil. "The highwayman?"

Stranger. "The governor calls me John Wesley; but I'm Jack. Say, what did you come here for?"

Phil. "To see you."

Jack. "Well, do you see any thing green?"

Phil. "I guess you'll do. Are ministers' boys all like you?"

Jack. "Yes, they are all hard nuts, but crack them and you'll find them sound inside."

Phil. "Come up here, and I'll show you where to go fishing."

Jack. "All right; you are sound, too. Most boys think we ministers' boys are green, but I let them know I am not. I don't like the boys here."

Phil. "Neither do I."

Jack. "Come on, then, and show me where's the fish, and I'll show you how to catch them."

Phil. "All right, come on."

Thus they became friends. Unlike in every respect, except their hatred of shams and falsehood, and their love of the fields and waters, they became inseparable companions. Jack became the leader, and soon knew more of the surrounding woods and waters than the native boy. From early morn till night the twins, as the boys called them, Jack Sheppard and Sam Patch, as they called each other, might be seen fishing, boating, swimming, roaming the fields and forests, gaining health, strength, and wisdom in the school of nature. They learned the forest trees, fruits, and flowers; what wood was good for bows, what for boats, for lumber, and fuel; what fruits and berries were good and what hurtful; the song and call of birds, the habits of the partridge, pigeon, duck, and crane; of the squirrel, hedgehog, and fox; and the use of their eyes,

ears, hands, feet, and all their bodily faculties. They also acquired useful lessons in the exercise of reason and observation, of prudence, patience, and judgment; and, above all, the great fact that nature, kind and winning as she is to those who obey her, is unchangeable in her laws and inexorable in her penalties.

These were some of the lessons that the "young vagabonds" learned, as some of the neighbors called them, who knew of no use for a boy except to study books or run on errands. But they were receiving the valuable tuition of the celebrated old master—Experience.

On one of their excursions in the spring, they came to a stream which had partly become dry and left some suckers in a pool where they could not escape. Here was a chance for sport too good to be neglected, and, hastily removing their shoes and stockings, they hid them in a pile of brush-wood, and went into the pool to catch the fish with their hands; but the inhabitants of the water were

too quick for them, and after trying a long time, without success, they started on a run across the fields, like young colts, without their shoes. At length returning, they came to the same brush-heap without recognizing it, and Jack proposed to make a bonfire. This was at once done, and the boys danced around it in glee, like young Indians around an expiring captive, until it was reduced to ashes. Then at once they noticed that the sun was down and thought of home and the missing shoes. But every pile was searched in vain, until they were compelled to conclude that they had left them in the pile which was now smoldering ashes. With light feet and heavy hearts, they turned their steps toward home. Their parents allowed them to go without shoes a sufficient time to teach them the necessity of greater carefulness in the future.

Another lesson they learned in a more serious manner. One morning the companions spied the steam-boat about starting down the river for a raft of logs which was to be towed back. This

seemed a fine chance for a free ride; and as the men thought they would return before night, and there was no time to ask permission of their parents, the boys sprang aboard and soon were merrily on the journey down the river. When the boat stopped, while the men secured the logs, the boys enjoyed themselves fishing and picking berries for their dinners, for their young stomachs reminded them of the dinner hour, though they had brought no lunch. Eagerly they then thought of home and the dinner-table. But there was no sign of returning. It was late in the afternoon before the boat started on its return to the town, and in the meantime a strong wind had come up against them, which, with the heavy tow of logs, made the progress of the little steam-boat very slow. A snail pace indeed, it seemed to the hungry boys, as the sun went down and still no signs of home. Earnestly they wished that they had not gone or had asked for permission, and taken a lunch with them. But this was not all their punishment. As they were

standing on the deck, a sudden gust of wind blew Phil's hat into the river. He made a spring to catch it, slipped, and fell overboard. Jack gave a scream, "A boy overboard!" and, with another splash, followed his friend. Jack was a better swimmer than Phil, and soon succeed in reaching him, but could do no more, and soon the boys drifted out of sight in the darkness. The men on the boat soon succeeded in stopping it, and hastened in a small boat to look for the missing boys. For a time nothing was heard, until, as they were about to give them up as drowned, they heard Jack say, "Here we are!" And there they were, on the raft of logs, upon which Jack had succeeded in climbing with the now almost exhausted Phil. They were taken on board, wet as musk-rats, the man said, shivering until their teeth chattered, and a good deal frightened at their narrow escape. At last, wet, cold, and hungry, they reached home late at night, and found half the town out looking for the lost boys. The distressed

parents were so glad to see them safe that they did not add any thing to their punishment, which had, indeed, been severe enough to teach them prudence and obedience.

One more adventure terminated the connection of all parties with the district school. One afternoon, as the friends were returning from their rambles, they saw a dark cloud of smoke rising over the village, and as they came nearer, perceived, by the unusual excitement, that there was a fire. On they hastened, and when they reached the place, found that the district school-house was all in flames. Some of the children playing after school, it was said, with coals from the stove, had dropped some on the surrounding papers and rubbish, which had quickly ignited the whole building. Others thought that some one had purposely caused the fire, by this means to be rid of the hated dominion of the stern old teacher. But now the flames were roaring loudly, darting out of the windows and curling and crackling over the roof, and

sending up a dense column of smoke and cinders, which spread far and wide. Not the school building alone was on fire, but the flames had communicated to the furniture store and church adjoining, and now all the people were hastening to remove the furniture and articles from those buildings, leaving the old school-house to its fate. Suddenly, amid the hurrying, shouting crowd, appeared the form of Theophilus Cartwright, taller and thinner, it seemed, than ever, with his head uncovered and his gray hair streaming, his long arms swinging like a wind-mill, striding with mighty steps toward the school-house. With pale face and panting breath, he gasped,

"Where is Willy Welch?"

No one had seen him; no one could tell until a small boy replied:

"You locked him in the closet!"

"Then he is there now!" screamed the school-master, and he rushed for the burning building; but he was met by a rush of fire and smoke as he burst open the door, and fell

back, half-stifled, shouting, "A boy, a boy in the school-house!"

The startling cry was taken by the children, and instantly all were gathered about the blazing building.

"Willy, Willy!" shouted the agonized teacher; but no response came back. "Will no one enter the building and save the boy?" shouted the old man, as he again started for the door. But one pulled him back, exclaiming:

"It is madness. Don't you see the floor is ready to fall in? You should be strung up for leaving him there."

"That's so," hoarsely responded the now excited crowd. But the leader shouted:

"There is yet a chance if some light person, some boy, will go in and open the closet. Will no one go? I will help him, if it burns the hair off from my head!"

At that moment there rose before Phil the vision of his own imprisonment and agony in the closet, and he imagined Willy's feelings,

with the horrible fire creeping nearer and nearer, in a moment to stifle and devour him. But an instant he stood, then he suddenly pulled his cap over his face and darted into the burning building so quickly that he was scarcely observed. At first he was completely blinded by the smoke and heat and, stumbling, fell to the floor. There, to his surprise, he found that there was less heat and a current of cool air. Carefully he crept along the floor, which crackled beneath him, until, at last—an age it seemed to him—he reached the closet.

"Willy, Willy!" he called, but all was still within. Then he tried the door, but it was locked. He pushed and kicked and strove with all his might, but it was too firm for his strength. He was now almost out of breath, half-stifled, and ready to drop with exhaustion, when he heard, close behind him, a whisper:

"Now, Phil, together!" and turning saw Jack Sheppard, with a beam torn from the burning building, ready to dash it against the

door. Phil grasped it, and, with a strong blow, the door burst open. All was dark within, until, by a shifting blaze, they saw, stretched upon the floor, the senseless form of Willy!

What was to be done? They could not carry him; they could not call for help. So, grasping one his head, the other his feet, they dragged him along the floor toward the door. But blinded and almost stifled themselves, they could not find the way by which they came. Groping, panting, they struggled on until the floor seemed to give way beneath them, and they all fell — down, down, it seemed an endless fall, until insensibility overcame them, and they lay there together, the rescuers and the rescued, while the flames roared louder about them and the dense smoke curled above them.

Long and anxiously the people waited and gazed into the flaming door to see the boys reappear, each moment making it more difficult for them to escape, while the leader still held

his station near the door until the fire singed his hair and beard, and he called to the brave boys to come out, and cursed himself for ever having asked them to enter. The school-master now danced about like a madman, and had to be restrained from casting himself into the flames. Just then a shout came up from the opposite side of the building:

"Here they are! here they are!"

All rushed to the other side, and there they saw the boys just outside of the door, at the foot of the stairs, where they had fallen and together had rolled some distance from the burning building. In an instant they were caught up in strong arms, their hot faces bathed in cool water, and they restored to consciousness. As soon as he could speak, Phil looked for Willy, and seeing him safe, turned to Jack and exclaimed:

"We saved him!" while Jack replied:

"I only followed you."

And Willy, now realizing his escape, clasped them both in his arms and wept tears

of joy and gratitude. The next moment he was snatched away by his overjoyed father, who could not find words to express his thanks to the brave deliverers, while the people shouted as two of the strong men bore Phil and Jack home in triumph on their shoulders.

The teacher was universally blamed for leaving the boy in the building. Soon after he left the village as suddenly as he had entered it, and was seen there no more

CHAPTER XII.

A MERCANTILE TRANSACTION.

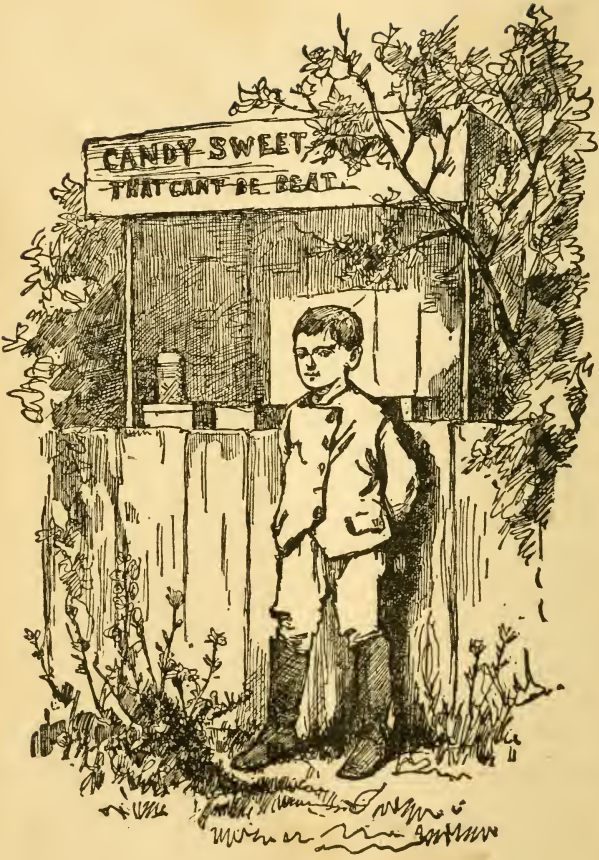
WHEN Phil was a child a gentleman had given him a gold dollar, and most highly did he prize the little beauty. There is something in a gold or silver coin which naturally impresses a child that it is a thing of value as well as of beauty—a something which its paper representative does not possess. His gold dollar, though no larger than the little three-cent piece, was worth a hundred cents—a mysterious quality which he could not quite understand.

But it lacked one thing, it was unproductive. As long as it lay in the bureau drawer it was a gold dollar and nothing more. His father had given him a corner in the garden, where, by planting a few ears of pop-corn, he obtained a winter's supply of that desirable article. His

mother also had some sheep which she "let out to double" once in four years, with the proceeds of which she supplied Phil and Nell with spending money.

But his gold dollar would neither grow nor double, and he sought for some means to increase it. His only experience in mercantile transactions was with the corner grocer, who sold candy for a cent a stick. At length, by diligent inquiries, he learned that candy could be bought at the market town much cheaper; that a pound, which contained forty or fifty sticks, cost only twenty-five cents.

Here was an idea; he could buy it by the pound, and retail it for a cent a stick, and double his money. So he prevailed upon his father to invest part of his gold dollar in candy, and he set to work to build a store. With this work he was familiar, for he had built many stores when there was no prospect of goods or customers. But now he resolved to build on a scale worthy of the occasion. With great labor and pains it was at last constructed.


CANDY SWEET
THAT CANT BE BEAT

It stood by the fence facing the lane. To be sure there were no travelers that way, but Phil knew he could drum up customers when the goods should arrive. Soon they came: two pounds of delicious candy. He could hardly realize that it was his. But though he felt very rich as the possessor of such a stock of sweetness, with great effort he refrained from consuming it, for was not this a business transaction? and he had an eye to the profits. In order to make his display perfectly irresistible, Phil expended the remainder of his capital in maple sugar, which he melted up and cast into beautiful scalloped cakes, in size to suit the purchaser. And the genuine article it was. It was not like the little yellow cubes sold on city corners, called maple sugar, but in reality a vile compound of molasses and sugar-barrel scrapings, which the unsuspecting city children devour under the delusion that it is the delicious product of the maple-tree.

The day of the grand opening arrived. It had been judiciously advertised in the right

quarters without any expenditure of printer's ink, or ringing of auction bell. Phil soon had all the youngsters in town gather around gazing upon his immense stock of consolidated sweetness, carefully examining the goods, inquiring the prices, and wondering how he could have become the possessor of such an amount of candy and sugar. Phil walked up and down behind his counter of unplaned boards, surveying his stock and store with modest pride, arranging it to the best advantage, answering questions, and inviting the by-standers to walk up and purchase. Here, thought he, is a fine beginning for business. Here is the store and the goods, and here are the customers ready and anxious to buy.

But there was one small impediment. In order to complete the transfer of the candy and sugar cakes from Phil's counter to the purchasers' mouths, an equivalent was necessary; namely, one cent. One by one the customers came up, examined, priced—and fell back. They had not the necessary one cent. And

soon, to his great disappointment, it became evident that there was not one in the whole crowd who possessed that bit of copper.

Gradually, after finding that he meant business, and could not allow the goods to be "sampled," the crowd of would-be buyers disappeared and he was left alone, undisputed possessor of all he surveyed. Yet he was not happy. This was not business. Phil was about to put up the shutters and retire from trade, when a new customer appeared and taught him how to do business without money. It was the village bully, Deacon Rider. With a most engaging air and patronizing manner, he approached, praised his store, examined his stock, and finally inquired the price of a sugar cake. "One cent," was the prompt reply.

"All right," said he. "I haven't got the money to-day, but I'll pay you to-morrow. You trust, don't you?"

The feasibility of doing business on the credit system had not occurred to him, but

from what Phil knew of the character of his customer, he declined to trust him.

"You can't sell unless you trust," replied Deak; "besides, you needn't trust others if you don't want to; but just trust me this time, and I'll pay you to-morrow sure, 'pon my word and honor. My mother promised me a cent for being good to-day," added he, with a sanctimonious look, "and don't you believe my mother?"

Phil did not venture to doubt his mother's word, but still declined to deliver the goods on credit. But all the afternoon Deak hung around, begging and promising, until not knowing how to get away from him, and being really anxious to sell, Phil let him have the cake, on his solemn promise to pay the next day.

This was a beginning of business, to be sure; yet he passed an anxious night thinking of the money which was owing him, and early next morning sought his debtor and demanded payment. The humble pleader of the previous day was a changed individual. With an easy air he put him off, saying, "I will pay you to-morrow!"

Phil could do nothing but wait for the morrow. The next day he again asked his due. Again Deak replied, "to-morrow," with a knavish laugh, which gave Phil little hope, yet the next day he applied again. Deak had now become tired of that, and he declared that he would not pay, and if ever Phil asked him for it again he threatened to give him the biggest "licking" he ever had in his life, and began to make gestures for putting it into immediate execution, such that Phil was glad to escape without his money.

Thus he learned of a new way of paying debts.

But he had another lesson still to learn in commercial affairs. He had sold a few cents' worth of candy, and began to have some hopes of success, when an opposition establishment opened across the way. Jack Sheppard, determined not to be outdone in enterprise, had opened a store for the sale of what, the world was informed by large straggling letters on a shingle nailed to the fence, was:

"Genuine,
Permanine,
Currant Wine."

This stroke of advertising drew immensely. What the second word in the advertisement meant, no one could tell; but the last word was sweet in the memory of every youngster who had taken secret tastes of that liquid stored in the cellar for extra use.

Phil saw at once that he must be equally enterprising or give up business. So that evening he set his wits at work to devise an equally poetical sign.

"Candy sweet," he began easily enough, for the adjective is unalterably linked to that noun; but he must have three rhymes; and not, like his neighbor, having sufficient ingenuity to invent a new word, he was at a loss. At length after great cogitation he produced another: "That can't be beat"—

"Candy sweet,
That can't be beat."

That sounded well, and as for violating a

rule of grammar in his verb, he felt no compunctions; for he was yet in blissful ignorance of those snares for youthful tongues.

So he went on:

"And maple sugar."

There Phil stopped. He could not find another word to rhyme, and yet apply to maple sugar; and as for omitting mention of that staple of his stock, it was out of the question.

"Candy sweet,
That can't be beat,
And maple sugar—"

He repeated it over and over as he rolled from one side of his bed to the other, beating his brains in vain for the other word. At last tired nature came to his relief and carried him off to the land of sleep. When Phil arose in the morning, there was the unfinished sign that would not down. Suddenly an inspiration came upon him, he seized a piece of board and wrote, in his boldest hand:

"CANDY SWEET,
THAT CAN'T BE BEAT,
AND MAPLE SUGAR. TREAT."

Here was a triumph. He had the three rhymes; but what relation the last word, *treat*, had to the others, was a question he did not stop to answer. Whether it meant that his customers were to walk up and treat themselves, or whether he was to treat them, was all unexplained. That could be done in words.

The sign was posted opposite to that of his competitor. But the customers, after puzzling over Phil's poetry and casting a longing look at his sweets, passed over and gathered around the store of his rival, where "Genuine, permanine, currant wine" was disappearing with alarming rapidity into the mouths of the young patrons. Phil's counter was almost deserted notwithstanding the attractions of his new poetical sign.

He soon discovered the cause: A currency was in circulation on that side of the lane cheaper than his, and, consequently, carrying

on all the business. It was pins. Long pins and short pins, straight pins and crooked pins, new pins and old pins—all were taken in exchange for a mixture of water, sugar, and currant juice, called "Genuine, permanine, currant wine." Here was another idea. Phil saw that he must conform to the laws of trade, or give up business, so he took the former alternative and began to shout:

"Candy sweet,
That can't be beat,
For ten pins a stick;
And maple sugar, treat,
All complete,
For one pin a lick!"

He soon perceived that he had struck the popular heart. His counter was soon surrounded by ready buyers, and he was busy taking and counting pins for candy, and watching the poorer youngsters to see that they did not take more than one lick of sugar for one pin.

Those were prosperous times. Never were pins in greater demand. The mothers' supply

of that useful article disappeared with mysterious quickness. One boy, having exhausted his mother's stock, driven to his wits, ran into a neighbor's house in great apparent agony, and begged for *two* pins to pick a sliver out of his foot. His competitor's counter was deserted, and he became one of Phil's best customers.

Rapidly his stock decreased, and his pockets and coat sleeves were stuck full of pin currency. In truth, they were so plentifully distributed about his person that he dared not sit down, for fear of coming in contact with them.

In the midst of his prosperity he became extravagant and crossed over to his rival's shop, and became the heaviest consumer of his liquid stock, while he, in turn, purchased more largely than ever of Phil's sweets. The poor youths who had spent all their pins looked on in envy, while they swaggered and boasted of their riches, and occasionally patronized some of the smaller ones with a treat. Phil even became a buyer of some of his own goods from his rival, who had shrewdly expended his whole

quantity of pins in candy. Business was never brisker than in Barn Lane that afternoon, as they ran back and forth buying and consuming each other's merchandise.

At length Phil's stock of candy was nearly closed out, and his neighbor's liquor exhausted; so business ceased. He closed up and sat down to count his profits. His gold dollar was expended, his candy and sugar was disposed of, and *per contra* he had about two hundred old rusty pins—and the stomach ache. The pins were not now in use as money, and were worth in coin less than two cents.

Phil pondered long and seriously over this result, for it was a serious matter; and it was long before he could discover the cause of the collapse. Then he concluded that specie was the best basis for business, and that credit was a poor means for trade. He had learned, what later financiers discovered at great cost, that an inflated currency cannot produce permanent prosperity.

CHAPTER XIII.

MR. GOODENOUGH'S SCHOOL.

PHIL'S "vagabond days" now came to an end, for a gentleman had come into the village and opened what was called a High School, or "select school for young ladies and gentlemen." Phil was not old enough to be included in the latter class, but as he was advanced for his age in his studies, and rather quick to learn, the teacher consented to take him. Phil became in time his favorite pupil, though he tried his teacher's patience severely by his pranks. On the other hand, he came to regard his teacher as one of the wisest and best of men, and to love him like a father, though there were several occasions in which the rod was spoiled and the child not spared, to Phil's great disgust.

Still these unpleasant episodes did not

seriously mar the general enjoyment of those happy school-days. This was before the advent of graded schools, marks, percentages, and all kindred inventions for promoting "emulation, wrath, strife," and other "works of the flesh." There were no "Boards of Education" to instruct the teacher as to the number of pages to be passed over each quarter, and to change text-books and teachers at their own sweet will. Phil's school was in a sad state of destitution as regards these "modern improvements."

Still they contrived to struggle along in blissful ignorance of their abandoned state. In lieu of examination they had special days, near the end of each term, when the minister and a few mothers came in to hear the classes recite in their usual manner.

Above all, there was a grand exhibition, the event of the season, to which the whole community flocked. Here was practiced the lost art of reading aloud, in which Phil participated, standing upon a stool to make him equal in

height to the tall farmer's sons around him. Shakespeare's most blood-curdling scenes were recited in hollow tones, and Hamlet's soliloquy declaimed with stentorian voice. Widow Bedott enlivened the scene with her loquacious presence. Startling charades were performed, and finally the young ladies read a "paper," containing moral essays and original puns and poems, with inaudible voices, which proved that, like the small boy, they were to be seen and not heard.

Phil's chief delight was in the parsing matches and evening spelling and grammar schools, where sides were chosen, and the wordy battle fought back and forth between the opposing ranks with keen interest and intense combativeness. His excitement over these contests was rivaled only by that of the debating society, where they discussed such themes as whether the Missouri Compromise ought to be repealed and the Fugitive Slave Law obeyed. These themes, also, the village solons argued as they sat in the post-office, around the stove,

spitting tobacco juice for emphasis, and whittling meditatively the empty dry-goods box. All the doings of the school were discussed in these meetings, and the progress of the pupils compared. The postmaster, having heard of Phil's proficiency in "figgers," invited him to assist in making up his accounts. Phil was rejoiced to find that his lessons were of some practical use.

Mr. Goodenough, the teacher, was a great patriot, and many were his harangues on "liberty, equality, and fraternity," which made a lasting impression upon Phil's mind. Once only was Phil unable to follow his instruction; when, having been nominated for school commissioner by the Republicans, and defeated by some of his own party, he went over in disgust to the Democrats. This awakened in Phil's mind the first doubt of his teacher's infallibility.

Phil's chief competitor in the spelling and parsing matches was a girl of about his own age, a bright brunette, with mischievous black

eyes, and flying locks, whose name was Amy Dean, but who was commonly called Frizzle. Many were the close contests which they had in their classes, though Phil cared more to stand well in the eyes of his fair competitor than for the victory. In arithmetic he was easily first. He could "set up" Rule of Three, and trace the transformations and somersaults of the most vulgar fractions, with the keenness of the hound in the famous problem of the fox and hound. He could even measure the monstrous fish that was half head, two thirds body, and five fourths tail. But amid the pitfalls of orthography the light step of little Amy often outstripped him, while amid the ponderous rules of Gould Brown's grammar, with their countless "exceptions" and the absurdities of "false syntax," they were about evenly matched. There was in his head what the phrenologists call a bump of approbation, which had become so well developed by the pattings on the head and praises of his teacher and others that it needed to be "taken down" occasionally. One

of these occasions was in his spelling class. One afternoon the minister came in just as the spelling class had taken its place in long line, reaching around the room. It was composed of short and tall, large and small, for the sturdiest "six-footer" was as liable to be bowled over before the flying word as the gentlest little maid, and in fact more so. Phil had "left off at the head" the day before, and was now at the foot of the class, while Amy stood at the head, both keen and wide-awake to catch a slip of the tongue or a wrong letter which might be turned to advantage. The usual lesson was quickly recited, though several of the biggest had fallen from the ranks. The old snares, "halcyon, surcingle, and ecstasy," were safely passed. Then the teacher turned to the ologies and diseases which afflict mankind, in name as well as fact. *Psychology*, *ichthyology*, *pneumonia*, *phthisis*, they met and escaped, and the combatants braced themselves for the "tug of war" as they saw the teacher turn to the "Ale Table." Here was a very Pan-

dora's box of ails and ills enough for the whole English-speaking race; but Phil and Amy boldly stood their ground, while great gaps appeared between them, where most of the class had fallen. Finally, the teacher left the Ale Table, and began to take words at random from Towne's old "Speller and Definer." The chief combatants breathed easier, yet kept a keen watch upon the teacher, while the minister looked on in admiration, and Phil's bump began to swell with conscious pride. There is an old proverb to the effect, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," which Phil had occasion to remember long after. It was one of the rules of the school that a pupil who thought a word was misspelled, which had not been corrected by the teacher, could correct it himself, and take the place of the one who missed it, and Phil was watching for such an occasion to resume the place at the head of the class, and distinguish himself before the visitor. Soon he saw a chance. Amy had spelled the simple word

"cattle," which passed without notice. Phil could hardly restrain his eagerness until his turn came. Then, disdaining the word the teacher gave, he shouted "k-a-t-t-l-e" and marched to the head, above the astonished Amy, while the teacher and the minister smiled, as Phil supposed, in admiration of his quickness and efficiency. But his triumph was short. At the next turn Amy again took up the word, spelled it *c*-a-t-t-l-e, stepped above him, the teacher assented, and Phil was obliged to walk back again in confusion to his place. The minister tried to smooth his fall by suggesting that perhaps Phil was thinking of "kettle." This was the real cause of his blunder, but it only increased his mortification, so much that when he reached his end of the class, where a door was open, he walked straight out of the room, without asking to be excused, and ran home in shame and chagrin. It was several days before he returned to school, fearing punishment for his act, and, more than all, to look into the face of his fair

little conqueror. But Mr. Goodenough passed over the whole matter without remark. Frizzle, when she saw Phil's embarrassment, went up to him gaily, placed her hand on his arm, and said, "It's all right, Phil, *we* spelled the school down, and we all know you can spell cattle." Phil cast a grateful look upon her, and said he should not soon forget it. He certainly did remember the lesson he had received for a long time.

Phil had another bump nearer the top of his head, dignified by the phrenologists by the name of "firmness," but variously known as stubbornness, mulishness, and sheer obstinacy, according to the location of it in ourselves or in others. As most of the persons whom he had met, both old and young, seemed also to be well developed in the same region, these opposing bumps sometimes came into collision. This was the case, one day, in his parsing class.

He had learned the rules so thoroughly and remembered the teacher's decisions so well, that he came to be a walking digest upon the sub-

ject, and the teacher was obliged, usually, to rule in Phil's favor, or have his own former rulings brought up against him. Phil's combativeness was so keen, and his zeal so intense, that he became the main fighter for his side, and a terror to those opposite, who could hardly open their mouths without hearing him pipe out, "I object." But he was caught in his own trap one day, when Amy parsed "boast" as an intransitive verb, and Phil objected. A fierce argument immediately arose, in which all joined, the teacher allowing it to go on for a few minutes. The other side contested that a verb is what "Bes, does, and suffers," that boast cannot do or suffer, and must, therefore, be intransitive, as one cannot boast any thing. But Phil stoutly contested the point, even after the teacher decided against him, until one of the opponents gave him a "clincher," saying, "Do you think you know more than your teacher?" Then he suddenly subsided, saying he was thinking of "boost," and he knew he could boost something. This turned the laugh upon

him so, that he had nothing to say. Boost passed into a by-word in the village, of which he did not soon hear the last. It is certain that his bump of self-esteem was not "boosted" by these events, and he felt less like "boasting" than before.

Phil's superiority stopped at the school-room door. In the play-ground many excelled him in boyish sports, especially his friend Jack. No boy could jump so high or run so fast as he. None could equal him in swimming or in skating, none knew so well where the best and ripest nuts aud berries grew, or how to snare the rabbit and catch the largest fish. In the school-room Phil aided Jack in his lessons, who was quick enough to learn when he applied himself, and Jack always took Phil's part on the play-ground. But on one point they agreed too well, which came near causing a serious breach in their friendship. They were equal in their admiration for bright-eyed Amy, while it was difficult to tell which she preferred, if she had any preference. In the school-room

she was very friendly with Phil, discussing knotty points in grammar, while he gladly helped her in arithmetic. His assistance in "partial payments" she repaid in full by her smiles and wiles. But out of school it was usually Jack's sled that she chose to ride home on, and from Jack she received, in summer, huge bunches of wild cherries and bouquets of wild flowers; and in winter, the sweet wintergreen berries which he had traveled miles through the snow to gather. Phil could express his admiration only in a huge candy heart, which he had saved all his pennies to purchase, and he could not help feeling a little envious of his friend when he could not give Frizzle equal presents; especially when she invited him to share some of Jack's fruit which almost stuck in his throat. His jealousy was caused mainly by his imagination, which had became aroused by the romances and tales of knights and ladies, tournaments and duels, which he had read until he imagined himself a knight, and that he must fight somebody in order to

prove it. So, after much consideration, he wrote and sent Jack a challenge to fight a duel. Jack was somewhat surprised, but took it as a joke and accepted. Phil refused to have any thing to say to him except through a second, and bade him name a place and weapons. Jack sent word that the place would be a neighboring cornfield; time, Saturday afternoon; and the weapons he would select when they arrived there. It soon became noised abroad among the boys, and when Phil arrived upon the "field of honor" with his second, who could scarcely keep from smiling at the sport which was Quixotic seriousness to Phil, they found it full of shouting, laughing boys. But they became silent as the "principals" approached, and the seconds bade them shake hands and strip for the fight. Phil noticed that Jack's hand trembled a good deal, but whether from fear or suppressed merriment, he did not know, while his own certainly did tremble as he thought of the consequences. He had concluded that the weapons would probably be

swords, and had carefully practiced with an old saber of his grandfather's which he had found in the garret. He had silently bidden good-bye to his mother and sister before leaving the house. Now, as he took off his coat, he took from his pocket a crumpled little valentine which he had received from Frizzle and requested his second, Willy Welch, to give it to her, if—if— He could not finish the sentence, but Willy understood. Then the duelists faced each other, but still no weapons.

"Where are your weapons?" demanded Willy of Jack's second. "Here," responded Jack, as he stepped into the cornfield and selected two of the longest and stoutest cornstalks. "We will fight with these, and the one who first cries 'Hold, enough!' shall be considered beaten."

A shout of approval went up from the boys, and Phil could but accept the situation. Immediately they fell to belaboring each other with all their might, for Jack was determined to beat some of the nonsense out of his old

friend, while the spectators laughed and cheered as one or the other put in a good stroke. The conflict was about even, for Phil's grit was up and he would not cry quit, though his strength was failing, when, in stepping back to avoid a blow, his foot struck a pumpkin, with which the field was strewn, and he fell back ignominiously to the ground. A shout of laughter went up, while Jack waited for his antagonist to rise, and hoped that the contest was now at an end. But Phil was incensed by the shouts, and seizing the pumpkin, he hurled it with all his might at his foe. Jack was not expecting such an attack. The soft vegetable shot split upon his head, and the seeds filled his eyes and mouth. Aroused by this charge he sought for a bigger pumpkin, which he hurled at Phil, while the boys shouted, "No fair, no fair," and took sides in the battle.

The cornstalk infantry advanced to the charge, while the pumpkin artillery threw their huge yellow shells over-head, which burst in their midst. Dreadful was the destruction,

especially of ammunition. At length, when the cornstalks and pumpkins were all exhausted, as well as the combatants, the conflict ceased. It was declared a drawn battle, and Jack, who somehow in the fray was found fighting on the side of Phil, seized his hand, and declared it the best afternoon's fun he had had in a year, and thanked him for suggesting it. By this time Phil had had enough of dueling; he saw the joke Jack had played on him, and was heartily ashamed of himself. He asked Jack to forgive him, and from that time they were better friends than ever.

That night the cows broke into the cornfield, through the fence which had been broken down in the fight, and before morning the last traces of the great battle of the pumpkins had disappeared.

CHAPTER XIV.

SOME LETTERS.

"ALL work and no play" is said to "make Jack a dull boy," and neither Phil nor Jack were disposed to have their faculties dulled by that monotonous exercise. Jack's father, who belonged to the itinerancy, was obliged about this time to "move on," the two years fixed by immutable decree having been reached. The boys kept up their spirits during the winter by a genuine boy's correspondence, consoling themselves for their separation by discussing the good times they were going to have "next summer." Jack's first letter related the usual experience of an itinerant's family. One of their playmates referred to was Lafy Summers, a stammering boy, though very little play did he get. His full name was Lafayette Summers. He was

the son of a stammering harness-maker, who kept him so hard at work that Jack declared that when he asked him what he was doing, that he was always "S-s-stuffing collars." The boys all sympathized greatly with Lafy on this account. But he was very fond of relating the exploits of his father, beginning all his tales with, "My pa-ah-ah, he." One of Lafy's experiences the boys never failed to find amusing. On one occasion, when sent to the mill for screenings for the hens, he was for a long time unable to tell the miller what he came for, but finally burst out, "Sc-s-s-s-scr—hen-feed!" But Lafy was a good-natured, generous boy, and none were more indignant at his treatment than Phil and Jack. There had been a "revival" in the village a short time before Jack's departure. Jack wrote:

"South Carolina,* *May* 13, 1860.

"Phil, you dear scamp: We arrived here last week, Wednesday, safe and sound; but

* The name of the State was Jack's fiction to indicate his sense of remoteness and lonesomeness.

we had to stay four days before our goods arrived, which were spent by me in cutting our summer wood. It is now done. We have a pretty good parsonage; not as good as that at Florence, by any means, but it will pass. I was greatly pleased with the fence. I was cutting down some bushes from it and it all tumbled down. But I put it up again. We have a good garden; but I guess we will not be able to raise more than a thousand bushels off from it, because it is all rocks. But father says that us boys can clear it up, so I suppose we will get along. You don't know how lonely I am away out here, away from all the world. I declare I had rather live in the moon. Phil, what shall I write about? I am sure I don't know. O, by the by, when you write tell me all about those revival meetings, who has got converted, and whether S-s-s-summers is on the way to h-h-h-heaven yet. Old S-s-summers is a mean old scamp. If he was my father he would wake up some of these mornings down cellar with a

sore head. It makes me mad to think of the old sinner (as Socrates says). I shall expect to hear some day of his being found with his neck through a halter.

We are in a regular den of Wide-awakes here. They came out in great array last Wednesday with fire-works and a torch-light procession. Now, Phil, write; tell me something. Give me a "blowing up"—do something to set my blood flowing, any thing to drive away these dreadful blues. Give my regards to your sister. So I must stop. Your old friend,

"JOHN WESLEY SHEPPARD.

"P. S.—My mother sends love to your mother, and wants your mother to write her 'very pertickeler,' she says. Good-bye.

"JACK."

In Jack's next letter he was in a more buoyant state of mind. It was addressed:

"HONORABLE PHIL VERNON, ESQ.:

"I have just come up from the village; had the first fuss with the boys that I have had

since I came. The fellow's name was Ferguson. He was walking along on the sidewalk when I met him. He did not know me, and thought I was some greenhorn or other, and told me to get off the walk and get out of his way, in a loud, authoritative tone. I told him to go to hail Columbia, when he struck me a heavy blow in the face, somewhat demolishing my 'smeller.' I grabbed him by the gas-pipe (throat) and shut off the usual supply of oxygen, which resulted in a very black face, while my fist produced a couple of ditto eyes (an accident, of course). I then let him up. He brushed down his clothes and started for home at a 2:40 pace. Next day his father honored me with a call. He said I ought to take a boy of my size. (He was only two years older than me! Too bad to pitch into such a little boy, isn't it?) He said he was sorry it happened, but it could not be helped now. I said so, too. The old man is worth $41,000. Poor, isn't he? That is the reason I answered his son so—because he is a *big bug.* Now,

Phil, you are breeding trouble for yourself by not writing oftener. I'll fix you when I come out there. Good-bye.

"Your old coon, JACK"

His third letter began:

"MY DEAR FRIEND:

"Look here, old boy, what do you mean by calling me such appropriate names because I have not written you before? I guess it *is* about time for me to write, but I was so confounded lazy I could not write. I have just returned from a fishing excursion, and as I have nothing else to do, I will write you about it. My success amounted to one minnow, seven pumpkin seeds, and four snags, which the folks around here think is pretty good luck. You wrote in your last letter that Lafy Summers had run away and gone to work. I am glad of it. I did not think he had so much spunk. I suppose he wont be 's-s-stuffing collars' now. In my last I used some pretty hard language about Mr. S-s-s-summers. I

ought not to have written it. We are having great times here. My sister Mary is here; so is her beau. He is a jolly chap, and gives me lots of things to keep out of his way. They got run away with the other day; but were not hurt much. Smashed the wagon all to smithers (as Socrates says).

My fortunes have changed since I wrote last; changed for the better, I tell you. I am working for a farmer for twenty-six dollars a month. No lost time. We have only five minutes for refreshments and prayers. These always close with the words, 'Amen. Jack, run and yoke the oxen.' Now I have good news for you, and if you refuse my request you will hear a buzzing around your ears. I want you to come out here the first day of October, then I will be free for a grand time. We will get each of us a good rifle, or one a shot-gun, and off we will go into the woods for a week. Now, old coon, be sure and come. I shall be 'flush' in the fall. 'Keep dark' at present; I am hard at work to

raise the 'spondulicks,' which are very handy about the house, especially when there is a premium on silver of 53¼ cents and 72 on gold. Your mother need not be afraid of the guns. They are gentle and warranted not to 'kick.' Come, sure. The old man is calling for me to come and milk the cows, so I must stop. Forgive all mistakes, for I have written this in less than no time. Good-bye.

"JACK WESLEY S——.

"P. S.—All sorts of game here, from a mosquito to a panther. Hurrah for fun!

"P. S. 2d.—If you can't come, I will visit you. JACK."

Thus it was decided that Jack should visit Phil. It was arranged that the great camping-out expedition should be at Red Lake, a picturesque sheet of water about six miles down the river, where the boys had often been before, but not to camp out. Now they planned to remain for six days and nights in the woods, with such accommodations as they could find,

which, to their boyish minds, was much more "fun" than to return to their comfortable home at night, or even to lodge at Simonds's, the only habitation near the lake. Simonds's was an institution. The widow Simonds, with her six stalwart sons and little else, had "settled" on the banks of the lake, built a log-cabin, and made a small "clearing," where their only means of access to their "neighbors," the nearest being several miles distant, was by the river, or across the lake. But in their humble cabin was a hearty welcome for all visitors. The widow, a tall, splendid specimen of a woman, with a smiling face and hearty voice, said she was fully paid for her humble hospitality by the opportunity to gossip and crack jokes with the callers, in which she was a celebrated expert. As for her boys, they could be heard to "whisper" across the lake, and when they laughed they woke the echoes for miles around. But they had no fear of disturbing their neighbors.

CHAPTER XV.

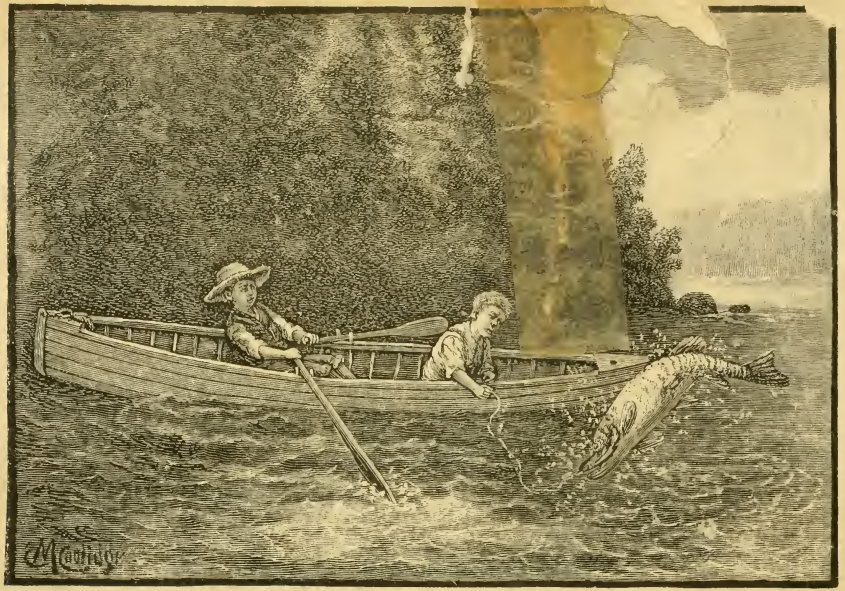
CAMPING OUT.

TWO happier boys never started off on a pleasure excursion than Phil and Jack as they pushed off their well-loaded skiff from Indian landing, and turned down the river. Their long waiting and anticipation had sharpened their active imaginations to the expectation of untold happiness, and this very gift went far to bring its own realization by blinding them to every discomfort and heightening every pleasure. Happy the man who still possesses his boyhood's love for field sports! He has an unfailing recourse from the slings of outrageous fortune, who can turn from the toils of life to these true recreations.

With vigorous strokes Jack took the oars, while Phil threw his "spoon" out with ardent hope of baiting the huge and wary muskallonge,

the eagerly sought prize of every fisherman, yet which is not easily lured by the glittering imitation of his shining prey. He knows that all that glitters is not gold nor fish. Slowly they floated down by Black Creek, on one hand, and Barnes's Creek, on the other, between the broad flats, over the weedy bars, where the great king of fish lies hidden, watching with keen eye and cruel teeth for his prey, down by the old saw-mill and the lime-kiln, to the shady green of Stony Point, where they stopped for lunch and a drink of cool water from the crystal spring.

It was only eleven o'clock, but they were hungry, as only active boys can be. Their lunch-basket seemed to be inexhaustible, and as eating is the chief exercise of pleasure excursions, they proceeded to lunch early and often. Then off again, down past the bluff rocks towering a hundred feet straight above them, near the top of which they could see the old eagle's nest, now deserted, as its owner had fallen before the hunter's rifle—down by



There he Goes! Chap. XV.

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Worden's knoll, and into the outlet through which winding stream they rowed, until suddenly the clear expanse of Red Lake burst upon them, which they greeted with a shout as the descending sun glanced over its sparkling waves and brightened the gray granite cliffs upon the opposite shore. No fish had been taken yet, but Phil was sure he had had a "bite." They had seen little game, though they had raised a few ducks at a distance, at which Jack had fired his gun (warranted gentle) in vain. But they had made great havoc among the turtles and water-snakes, taking their quiet sun-bath on the logs and rocks.

They went first to Simonds's, where Phil had often been with his father, to borrow a few blankets for their camp, which they intended to make across the lake in an abandoned choppers' hut. The widow received them kindly, and urged them to stay at her house over night; but they were determined that no human habitation should shelter them that night.

She gave them what they wanted, with a pleasant word of motherly caution as to their guns and the water, and watched them out into the lake and around the point of rocks.

"Them village boys aint used to boats and guns, and I don't see what makes their parents let 'em come down here in that way," she said, as they disappeared. "But I s'pose they've got to learn to take care of themselves sometime," she added, as she returned to the house.

"Now, Phil, we're in for it," shouted Jack. "Hurrah for fun! But first let us find our cabin, 'Our old cabin home,'" and the words of the old song pealed from his mouth, and reverberated among the rocks and the dark, solemn forests. So they rowed across the lake, found the path up the cliff, and the choppers' shanty. It was open in front, with a sloping roof of half-round barks of the hemlock-tree, placed alternately with the hollow up and down so as to form a complete roof and protection against the rain, thus: . In it was nothing but the broken floor of loose

boards, and a few boughs in one corner, where the last lodger had made his bed. It was like the caravansaries of the East, free to all comers. But they were obliged to supply themselves with board and bed. The boys noticed its appearance, and felt sure that it had not been occupied for a long time.

They remembered this clearly when they came to consider the strange incidents which afterward befell them there. They deposited their provisions carefully in a corner, laid their blankets over them, hung up their guns on some wooden pegs, and were about to get some fresh branches for their beds, when they were startled by a great splash in the lake. Looking down they could see the broad, spreading circle of ripples where a great fish had sprung up and down again in pursuit of his prey. In an instant the boys were all excitement. With repressed shouts and exclamations they ran back to their boat and quickly, yet quietly, rowed to the lower end of the lake, near its border of pond-lilies where the fish had been.

As they rowed quietly around with beating hearts and trembling expectation, they saw an occasional swirl under the broad pads of the water-lily, where the lurking fish had lain, but yet he did not see or seize their bait. The sun had set, and a broad band of ruddy gold lay along the sky and on the glassy waters. But the boys were intently watching the trolling-line, when, suddenly, there was a great splash close beside them, so near that the water spattered into the boat, and a great head appeared and seized the oar in its mouth. The boys were dumb with astonishment as it disappeared. When the oar was examined, one of the keen teeth of the savage muskallonge was seen sticking in the wood.

"I vow that's mighty mean," at length exclaimed Jack, "for that fish to go and bite the oar, when if he had only waited a minute and bitten the spoon, we would have given him something to bite on."

"What a monster!" exclaimed Phil, when he could get his breath. "Probably the oar went

right over him, and he bit before the spoon came up. Never mind, we'll give him another chance."

And they rowed around full of eager expectation, as the twilight gradually deepened toward dark, when they could fish no longer. Phil who was holding the long trolling-line was lost in his reflections, watching the ripples flow from the oar, and the silver drops glisten in their fall, when a sudden, powerful jerk on the line aroused him and sent a tingle through every nerve. At the same instant a splash was heard behind them, and Jack saw the great fish leap high into the air and dart off like lightning.

"There he is, you've struck him!" shouted Jack. "Give him line, or you'll lose him," he called to Phil, as he felt the strong strain on the boat. But Phil felt it, too, and the line was running through his fingers like that of a harpoon, as the muskallonge, feeling the hooks in his jaw, and finding the first plunge did not loosen them, darted off at right angles with a

force that would have broken the line at once if resisted.

"The line is all out," cried Phil, while Jack turned the boat toward the fish still striving to get free. He had not exhausted his resources by any means, for in a moment Phil felt the pull cease, and thought the fish had freed himself.

"No, he is coming for us; pull in fast. Don't give him any slack line," shouted Jack, as he pulled with all his might. The fish was coming toward the boat like a shot, and the next moment he rose high in the air, and shook his head until the spoon rattled like the bits in a horse's mouth. Then down he went again. "There, he's off," shouted Jack; "I knew that game; you should have pulled him in faster."

"No, he's on yet;" replied Phil, as he felt the strong line, now almost straight, down to the bottom of the lake.

This continued for some time. Phil gradually pulling in, and the fish gamely holding

the water, when, as he came in sight of the boat, there was another splash, and he darted off in the opposite direction. Again the line was carefully paid out, Phil taking care to keep it taut that the fish might not try his game of running up again. Thus the contest went on until, at last, he was brought up near the boat and the boys could see his long head, heavy jaws, and sullen eyes, as he swam around and under the boat, evidently studying what trick to try next. The boys could not try to lift him into the boat, and they had no gaff-hook or club with which to kill him.

Phil suggested trying to seize him with his hands, but Jack cautioned him that if he should get his hand in the fish's mouth he would think a bear had bitten him. Phil then tried to draw him a little closer, but as soon as he saw the boys he gave another powerful sweep of his tail and was off again nearly the length of the line. At last he was drawn up to the boat again, where he lay apparently exhausted, and the boys determined to lift him in. But no sooner

did they touch him than he gave a great leap, dashed under the boat, the line caught, snapped, and the fish was gone. The boys dropped their oars and lines and looked at each other in blank disappointment. The muskallonge was surely lost at last. Phil drew in the line, about twenty feet of which, with the hooks, was gone.

"It's too confounded bad," exclaimed Jack.

"He's gone, and our hooks, too," dolefully replied Phil.

"He'll have them to chew on for a while," replied Jack, with a laugh.

Thus they made the best of the result of their day of sport. It was now so dark they could scarcely find the way to their cabin, and good Mrs. Simonds, as she heard the boys shouting in the darkness, said, as she closed her door for the night:

"I wonder what them youngsters are doin' out there in the middle of the lake at this time of night. But I s'pose boys wouldn't be boys if they couldn't make a noise."

Phil and Jack climbed the steep path to the cabin as best they could, with heavy feet but with light hearts, for they had had a grand day's sport, and instead of complaining of their luck, determined to try it again early the next morning. As the entered their hut in the dark, Phil stumbled over something that lay in the door, which was not there when they left it. Jack struck a match and lighted a candle, which they had brought with them. Then they saw that Phil had stumbled over their lunch-basket, which was overturned; its contents were scattered about, and they soon found had been partly devoured, and plainly not by a human being. They looked at each other and whispered, "What is it?" Then, in answer to their question, each replied, with a more thrilling question, "Bears!"

"Let us build a fire at once," suggested Jack, and for a moment they forgot their fears as they busied themselves building their fire, which soon crackled and blazed before their door, completely guarding it. Then they drew

up a supply of wood for the night, not daring to seek far for it, and sat down to rest beside it. As they did so, Jack looked for their blankets, and they were not to be found. This added to the mystery of the lunch-basket.

"Some one has been here and stolen them!" exclaimed Jack. "What will Mrs. Simonds say?"

"And what will we do?" added Phil; "and who ate the lunch?"

"Perhaps it was the man's dog," suggested Jack; "but we will be ready for the thieves, whoever they are," he added, as he reached for the guns.

He stepped back in amazement. They were gone! Then the boys felt like crying.

"Who could be so mean as to steal our blankets and guns and lunch?" sighed Phil.

"And spoil all our sport besides," added Jack, with deep disappointment.

"And what shall we do if there are bears around?" asked Phil, feeling yet some alarm on that account, for he was not fully satisfied

with the dog hypothesis. He had noticed where an animal with sharp claws had scratched the log, and called Jack to look at it. As he did so, Jack put his hand upon something soft and furry beside the log.

"What is this?" he exclaimed. Looking closer, he saw that it was the skin of a large black bear. "How did this come here?" he asked, with increasing perplexity. "The thief has left something in place of what he took, and this will take the place of our blankets to keep us warm. But what is this?"

On the edge of the skin, pinned to it with a thorn of the crab-apple tree, was a strip of paper, evidently torn from one of the newspapers which were in their basket around their parcels. On it was writing in a large, peculiar hand, that yet, somehow, seemed familiar to Phil. It was written with the point of a stick dipped in the purple juice of a berry, and read:

"Even exchange is no robbery. A bear stole your provisions; look out for him!"

"We would look out for him if we had our guns," exclaimed Jack. "But the thief has taken them, and then says look out for the bear. That I call the unkindest cut of all. But I wonder, Phil, what will Mrs Simonds say to this bear-skin in place of her blankets!"

Thus they lay and talked to keep up their courage, while the fire burned brightly, and they scolded the person who had made this strange trade with them without their consent. They heard no sounds of bears or other wild animals, and were about falling asleep when they heard the voice of a man almost in their ears, yet strangely weak, saying:

"Even exchange is no robbery. You will be repaid."

For a moment they were frightened at this strange voice, coming, apparently, out of the ground. Jack, supposing the speaker to be near, replied:

"I say it is clear robbery to take our things without our leave; you can have your old bear-skin."

Again came the voice, calm and clear, yet as from a distance:

"I need those things much more than you, dear boys; forgive me, and I will repay you."

They were somewhat re-assured at these words, and replied:

"All right. Who are you?"

The answer came faintly:

"A friend."

"Come in, then," said Jack, though he had some misgivings as to the strange speaker.

But more faintly still came the answer:

"I can never see you. Good-bye."

"Good-bye then, old fellow," answered Jack, losing some of his resentment at these mournful tones.

The boys were by this time so sleepy that nothing could keep them awake, and soon they were fast asleep.

CHAPTER XVI.

A QUEER BARGAIN.

WHEN Phil and Jack awoke in the morning the sun was an hour high, their fire had burned low, and their backs and limbs were stiff from lying on the hard boughs. They awoke hungry, and their first thought was breakfast. While they kindled the fire and prepared to fry some potatoes and make some coffee, they spoke of the events of the night.

"Were we dreaming?" asked Phil.

"Not I," answered Jack.

"Where, then, was that man?"

"Don't know; up a tree, I guess; I don't care, anyhow. If I only had a piece of that muskallonge to eat with our potatoes, I would not care for any thing."

Just then Phil went into the hut for

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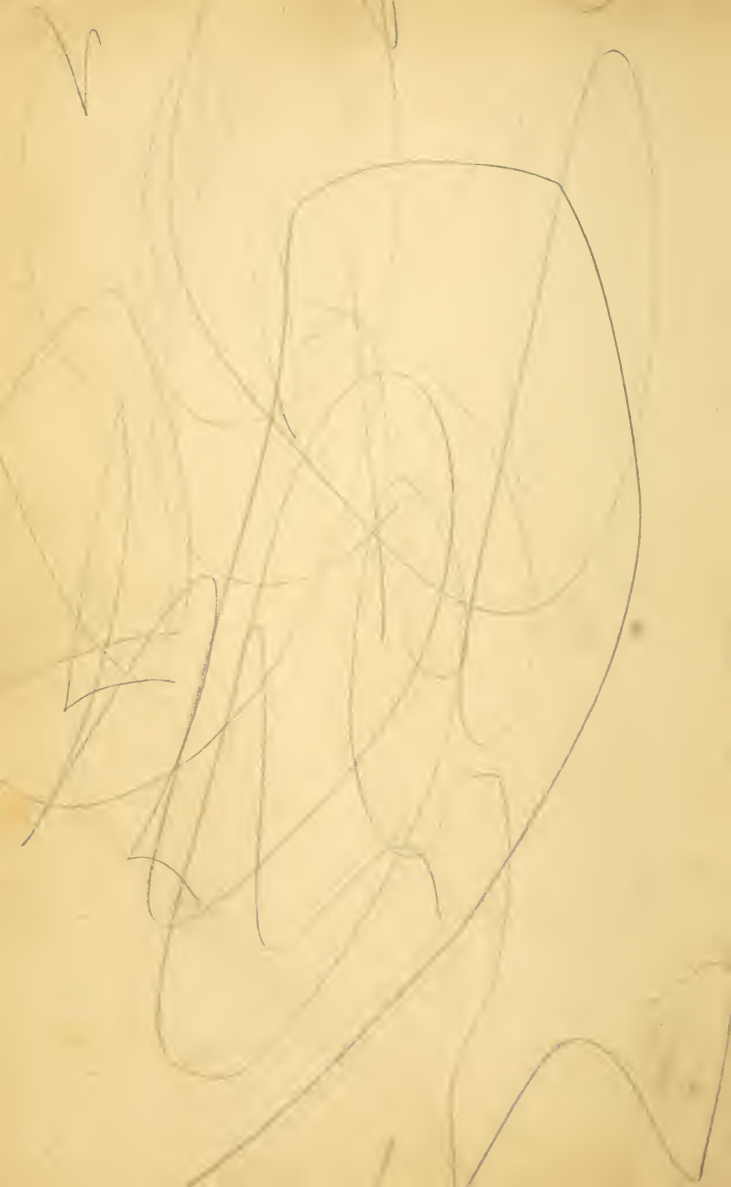

something, and heard again the voice of the night, saying:

"Look on the big maple behind the hut."

Phil did not answer, but went quickly to the tree, and there saw a most astonishing sight. He called to Jack:

"Come here, quick!"

Jack ran to him, and there, hanging to a lower limb of the tree, was an enormous muskallonge, with hooks in his mouth, and a piece of fish-line by which he was tied.

"What's that?" exclaimed Phil, pointing to the tail of the fish. On a piece of paper, like that on the bear-skin, was written these words: "Here is your fish, credit me on account. A friend."

"Did it drop from the skies?" exclaimed Phil.

"No, it has just come out of the lake," replied Jack. "Twenty-five pounds, if it weighs an ounce, and it is as long as you are."

As it hung from the tree its tail swept the ground, while its head was nearly on a level

with Phil's. The boys could but admire the strong jaws and keen teeth of the fish.

"Those are your hooks in its mouth," exclaimed Jack, "as sure as guns. It is ours, and we'll have some for breakfast. Hurrah!"

Jack immediately proceeded to dress it, and soon had a piece frying over the fire, while Phil looked on, too much astonished by the affair to be able to do any thing. But Jack was in too good spirits to trouble himself about the wherefore of things as long as they were sent him. His life, as an itinerant minister's son, had taught him to take things as they came, without question or complaint.

"How did it come here?" Phil repeatedly asked.

Jack replied, "It's our fish, isn't it? and it's good, isn't it? Then let's eat it and go after more. But I don't feel square with the old fellow, for he has spoiled our hunting. Perhaps he'll make another payment on account. The fish was really ours, if he did catch it

afterward; but we'll give him credit. Let's try our luck again."

After the boys had cleared up their breakfast, as they were setting on a log beside the hut discussing their plans for the day, they heard, almost in their ears, these words: "Are we even now?"

"No!" shouted Jack, "who in the world are you? where are you?"

They sprang up and looked around.

"I can't stand this any longer," continued Jack, running rapidly about and looking behind the trees and rocks. "That trick is played out," he called to his unseen visitor. "Come out, you coward."

But no one came out. Phil was carefully examining the inside of the hut. There he found an old tin can, apparently a powder-can, lying between the logs. But on attempting to take it down he was astonished to find that it was fast. Looking closer he saw a hole through the bottom of it, and a string fastened in by a knot. Running outside he found the

string leading up to the top of the cabin and off among the trees.

"Jack, come here," he called; "look at this."

"What of it," said Jack, looking carelessly at it. "It's only a string."

"Yes; but what is it for?" asked Phil.

"You are always asking 'what for,' Phil," replied Jack. "You would want to know what the world was made for."

"Yes, I do," said Phil, seriously; "but now I want to know where that string goes to."

"What for?" now asked Jack, in his turn.

"Because it is fastened to that tin can, and that lay in the logs close by our heads, and—and I—"

"You don't suppose any one could talk through that, do you?"

"I don't know. You know when you scratch on a long stick with a pin, you can hear through it at the other end. It may be so with this arrangement. But let's follow the string."

Jack climbed the tree and found the string stretching off through the tree-tops, whence,

by guiding Phil, he found the next tree. Thus they followed slowly and carefully, for the strange instrument was well concealed by its contriver. At length they found the string descending to the earth, and following it, they were greatly surprised to see it go into a crevice in a large rock in the side of the cliff. They examined it closely and walked around it, but, to their great disappointment, they could see nothing but the single crevice in the great rock. Neither could they find any trace of the string emerging from the rock.

"This is very strange," remarked Phil.

"So much for following a string," exclaimed Jack, in disgust. "I go a fishing, as Simon Peter said. Come on."

They returned to the cabin. But these strange adventures were not yet at an end. They had gone but a few steps when they heard steps behind them in the bushes, and, looking back, they saw at the same time a black animal about the size of a large Newfoundland dog coming toward them.

"A bear!" exclaimed Phil; while Jack could only shout:

"O, my gun! the thief! the rascal!"

Then they took to their heels. The bear did not follow very fast, and they were soon out of immediate danger. Then they armed themselves with stout sticks, and determined to stand their ground.

"It is not a very large one," said Jack, while his heart beat louder than he was willing to admit.

"But if it is a cub, the old one may come," suggested Phil, timidly.

"Then we can climb one of these small saplings; the bear can't climb so small a tree," replied Jack, bravely. "Here he comes."

Certainly the bear was slowly following them; not very closely, but snuffing along as if looking for something to eat.

"He is the thief who broke into our lunch-basket," said Jack. "I'll pay him for it;" and he stoutly brandished his club.

Phil wished he was somewhere else, but had

no thought of deserting his companion. Leisurely the bear approached, until seeing the boys, he began to jump and prance and bob his head in a way that would have been very amusing at a safer distance. Closer and closer he came, still keeping up his antics, and evidently wanting to scrape acquaintance, which the boys were disposed to decline, as they saw his long claws and sharp teeth. Boldly they stood their ground while young Bruin gamboled nearer, until he came into a small clearing in front of them, when he suddenly reared up on his hind feet and began to dance. This was a performance not down on the bill. The boys knew that bears often attack men in this manner, but they had never heard of one executing a preliminary war-dance before seizing his victim. Just then Phil pointed to the bear and exclaimed, "What is that?"

Around the bear's neck hung a kind of placard, like those on the street beggars, saying, "I am blind." As the bear danced nearer they saw that his placard bore an inscription,

and they read, in the same hand as before, "I am tame."

"Tame or crazy! that's a fact," exclaimed Jack, "for no wild bear in his senses would perform like that."

The bear now advanced familiarly, picked up a stick, and began to go through his evolutions, dancing around in a circle in such a comical manner, that the boys lost their fears entirely, and shouldering their clubs they danced around after the bear, laughing until they thought they should split. Here was a scene: two respectable boys and a young bear in the great forest by themselves, dancing like fawns to the music of the birds and the frogs. At length they became more familiar with their acquaintance, and taking care to keep out of the reach of his claws and teeth, they examined him closer, when they noticed a further inscription on his badge. It read, "Take me on account."

"It is from our old friend, the unknown trader," exclaimed Jack. "Now, this is something like it. We begin to be even. But who-

ever heard of a bear delivering himself up with a bill of sale around his neck! What's your name, my frisky friend?" continued he to the bear.

"Here it is on the corner of the card," replied Phil, whose keen eyes were on the lookout to discover some explanation of these mysterious occurrences. "'Rex.' That is not a bad name. It means king. But who could have given it to him?"

"There you go again!" exclaimed Jack, "asking questions. I tell you, take things as they come and ask no questions."

"Well, now, you have the bear, what will you do with him?" said Phil.

This was a question. But it was answered by the bear himself coming and lying down at their feet like a dog. Then they noticed that he had a stout collar around his neck, and attached to it, wound about his neck and almost concealed in his long hair, was a small iron chain.

"Here we have it," said Jack, cautiously

unloosing the chain, while the bear lay perfectly quiet, apparently exhausted by his recent orgies. "Now we have you, Mr. Rex."

He slipped the chain around a branch, and the bear was secure.

"Wasn't that a queer bear-fight?" laughed Jack. "Old Anon may have the guns. A live bear is better than a dead one any day. Wont we make a sensation when we go home!"

"But whom did it come from?" still queried Phil.

"Never you mind; there he is, anyhow," replied Jack. "Let's hurry to our fishing, or it will be too late, or something else may happen. Come on!"

Again they started for their boats, leaving their new friend fast asleep in the sun. Phil was much perplexed by these occurrences, to which he could offer no solution, but his spirits rose at the sight of the beautiful waters of the lake, and its waves dancing in the sunlight. He soon entered into the enjoyment of the oc-

casion with his companion. The morning was bright, a fresh breeze was blowing, raising the waters of the lake into curling waves, on which their light skiff tossed, but not half so light and free as the hearts of the happy boys, without a thought but to follow every impulse and be joyous as the birds, and all nature herself as she smiled upon them in the bright waters, the waving woods, and the grand old rocks, forever the same.

After trolling awhile in vain for muskallonge, they sought the equally pleasant, if less exciting, sport of fishing for black bass with rod and reel.

"The black bass takes a back seat for no fish that swims," said Jack. "He makes the lives of the pickerel as miserable as the Jews in Russia. Though he has not such sharp teeth, he swims under them and cuts them with his keen back fin."

But it seemed that the cawing crows had sped the news of the loss of their guns, for game was now all around them. Ducks swam

tantalizingly near, while Jack breathed dreadful adjectives about the loss of his gun. A huge crane sailed slowly overhead within easy shot; even the turtles basked unheeding upon the logs, while high in air they heard a wild scream, and saw against the sun the fading form of the bald eagle pursuing his solitary way in the upper air.

Thus the morning passed in hearty sport and harmless jest until the boys knew it was nearly noon by an inward chronometer, more regular than the sun, that never runs down. It is especially active and prompt in growing boys on fishing excursions. So they reluctantly abandoned their fishing and turned toward the opposite side of the lake where their camp was.

They had been so intent upon their sport that they had not noticed that the wind had risen, and in the middle of the lake the white caps were beginning to show, while they had felt little effect of the wind in their sheltered cove. They had nearly reached the middle of

the lake before they noticed how their little skiff was rolling in the waves. They soon realized their danger and decided to steer for the nearest point, when three large rollers followed together. The first partly filled the little boat. The others swamped it, and it capsized. Both boys managed to cling to the upturned skiff, but every thing else floated away. They were out of sight of Simonds's, the only habitation on the lake, and their voices could not be heard against the wind, though they hallooed until they were hoarse. The boat was slowly drifting down the lake toward the shore, which was more than a mile distant.

"Here is a go, Phil," said Jack. "The worst is, we have lost all our tackle; but there is no use in our staying here all the afternoon. When we float past that point ahead I mean to swim ashore and go to Simonds's for help."

Phil was not a good swimmer, and did not relish the idea of being left alone on the boat, but it seemed the best thing to do.

As they were now opposite to the point, Jack helped Phil to secure himself to the boat, threw off his coat and boots, and struck out for the shore. Phil watched anxiously Jack's brown head bob up and down amid the waves as the strong swimmer neared the point.

It was farther than they thought; but at length, after what seemed to Phil an endless time, he saw Jack climb up on the rocks and heard his cheering shout. Then he waved his hand and disappeared in the woods in the direction of Simonds's.

Phil now began to feel very uncomfortable and lonely there in the lake amid the dashing waves, and no human being within sight or sound. He began to grow numb, and a strange chill came over him, though it was a warm day. He felt a strange sinking of his heart, the hills and waters grew dim, he fell forward upon the boat, and knew no more.

An hour later Jack returned with one of the Simonds boys, with dry clothing and blankets. They looked up and down over the water in vain. At last they spied the boat at the foot of the lake upturned upon the rocks, but Phil was nowhere to be seen.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE HERMIT OF RED LAKE.

WHEN Phil woke to consciousness it was dark. He did not know where he was, only that he was lying on a comfortable couch of furs, and that the clothes he had on were not his own. Then he remembered the accident on the lake and the departure of Jack. The rest was a blank.

He knew he must have fainted on the boat, but how he had been rescued or where he was he had no idea.

But he soon had a very distinct idea that he had not dined. He sat up, and as he did so his hand struck a rude table by his side. There was a dim light, but he could not see whence it came. By it he perceived on the table some pieces of jerked venison, some nicely broiled fish not yet cold, some fresh

berries, and a cup of cold water. He hastily made a lunch, then the keen curiosity which had possessed him since he came to the camp seized him again, and he sought to solve the mystery. Soon he noticed that it was gradually growing lighter, and the place where he found himself began to take form. All about him he saw huge jagged rocks, through crevices in which the daylight dimly filtered. It was evidently a kind of cavern, which was fitted up as a dwelling. It was without door or windows, yet it had an air of comfort and even of luxury. A curiously-carved book-case hung on the wall, in which he noticed some old vellum-bound books, and there were strange mathematical and chemical instruments lying carelessly in crannies of the rocks. There were easy-chairs and couches covered with fur, and on the foot of his couch were some blankets which interested him more than any thing else. They were those which he had borrowed the day before from Mrs. Simonds! In a corner stood Jack's rifle. Now he knew

he was in the hidden home of the man who had made the strange bargain with them and spoken to them through the string telephone. But his unknown friend still preferred to remain Anon, as Jack called him. Phil's curiosity was only increased by these strange discoveries. He walked rapidly around the narrow room and sought in vain to find his way out. The garments in which he found himself excited his amusement. They were very much too large for him, and were of a style and cut which had long been out of date. They were sadly worn and greatly in need of a needle. Phil could but laugh at his comical appearance, when he thought what Jack would say at his looks.

Then he saw, laid out on a ledge of the rocks, his own garments, nicely dried. He quickly made the exchange, and felt like himself again. As he continued to search about the place he put his hand in his pocket and found a scrap of paper. Placing it in the best light he could get, he deciphered it as follows:

P. VERNON and J. SHEPPARD, in acct. with ANON MANN, Cr.

By 2 Woolen Blankets - - - - 5 dollars.
" 1 Rifle - - - - - - - - 15 "
" 1 Shot-gun - - - - - - - - 10 "

Per contra, Dr.

To 1 Bear-skin - - - - - - 10 "
" 1 Muskallonge, 25 lbs. - - - 5 "
" 1 Tame Bear - - - - - - 5 "
" Services in Rescuing said Vernon from the Lake - - - - 10 "

The account was not balanced, but Phil felt it had been more than equaled by the last act of his unknown benefactor. But why he should hide himself in this way, and yet feel such an interest in him, he could not conceive. At the same time he felt uneasy about Jack, and wondered what he would think had befallen him. While these thoughts ran through his mind, he was surprised by hearing the same voice again. It said: "How do you feel this morning, after your long bath?"

Phil replied: "Very well, thank you, and am greatly obliged to you. Now I would like to get out, if you please."

"You can go out when you wish," was the answer.

"How?" asked Phil. "I can't find any door."

"Go to the corner diagonally opposite the book-case," came the reply. "You will find a rope-ladder. Climb to the top and push the slide in front of you to the left; then climb down."

Phil followed the directions, climbed the ladder, and found himself inside of a hollow tree or stump. In front of him hung a small sliding door, which he pushed, as directed, and looked out. The ground was some distance below him, but he reached it easily by climbing down the outside of the stump, while the door swung back to its place, entirely hiding the opening. He looked carefully about him, and soon recognized the rocks into which he had traced the string telephone. By this he

soon found his way to the camp. It had been visited and every thing removed. Jack had evidently been there, and, not finding him, had given up the search. Phil ran to the lake and eagerly glanced over it, but no boat was in sight, and only the smoke from Mrs. Simonds's cabin across the lake gave signs of human life. Then he realized that he must again seek his unknown friend in order to return, as he had no means of crossing the lake. He turned to retrace his steps when he heard a sound, and turning, saw the tame bear, Rex, slowly walking forward on his hind feet, extending one paw, as if to shake hands, and giving queer nods and grunts of satisfaction at seeing his old friend. Phil felt really glad to see the bear, and exclaimed:

"How are you, Rex? Is your master near?"

The bear seemed to understand the question. He gave a nod of his head, dropped on all fours, and ran back into the woods by the way Phil had come. Rex went straight to the old

tree, climbed it, and disappeared in the opening. Phil followed and descended by the ladder. He did not relish his position, but he did not wish to leave the place until he had discovered its occupant.

Rex lay down in a corner, and Phil sat down to consider how he could secure the assistance of Mr. Anon, as Jack had called him. He determined to make an appeal to his generosity. He spoke aloud, with a strange feeling that the hermit inhabited the whole place and could see and hear him wherever he might be.

"Mr. Anon!" he called, "I don't know what else to call you; you have been a friend to me in rescuing me and allowing me to go out of the cave. If you hear me, will you not let me see you? I am dying with curiosity. You must be a wonderful man, and I want you to explain all these doings. Besides, Jack has gone and left me for drowned, and I cannot cross the lake to go home. He will tell my parents, and soon have the whole town

down here. If you don't want that, help me to return. Halloo-o-o!" he concluded, hearing no reply to his speech but the echoes of his voice. At last he began to think he had wasted his eloquence. But at length he heard another voice, faintly, as if from the wall. The voice said:

"I know you, and believe I can trust you. Promise me that you will not reveal what you learn to any one without my consent."

"I promise truly," Phil replied, solemnly, feeling there in the dim cavern alone with a sleeping bear, and conversing with an unseen being, like the awed initiate of some mysterious conclave. But he did not fear; for he knew there could be no motive to harm him.

"I will aid you," said the voice. "Wait a few moments."

Phil sat what seemed a long time in silence, hearing only the breathing of the bear and the beating of his own heart, until he saw, suddenly appearing before him, as if from a hidden recess in the rocks, the tall form of the

hermit. He perceived in the dim light an old man with long white hair and beard, keen black eyes, and bushy brows. He wore hunting breeches of buckskin, and a vest of untanned doeskin. By his side hung a cap of coon skin, with the tail of the animal attached to it. The old man looked at Phil keenly yet kindly, while Phil approached and offered his hand with a mingled feeling of awe and sympathy. This quickly changed to trembling fear and astonishment as he recognized, through all his changes and disguises, the form and features of the old school-master. A feeling of dread came over him as he found himself alone with the old man in that strange place. But he advanced steadily, took his hand, and said, calmly:

"How do you do, Mr. Cartwright?"

The hand in his trembled and fell. For a moment the hermit stood in silence; but he concealed his surprise at Phil's recognition by a strong effort, and said, calmly:

"It is, indeed, I, Phil. I did not think you

would recognize me here. You are the first being I have spoken to since I left the village after the fire. I fled to this retreat to hide forever from the world and from myself."

An expression of pain swept over the old man's face, and he abruptly ceased to speak. Phil now found vent for his questions all at once.

"Are you the man who took our things, and caught the fish, and made the string telephone? who sent us the bear, and brought me here?"

"Yes," replied the hermit; "I have arranged a sort of *camera obscura* on the top of my cave, by which I see every thing on the lake and in this vicinity. I saw you and Jack when you camped here, and when you caught the muskallonge. In the morning I saw it coming to the surface with the hooks in its mouth, and took it. I visited your camp, and found your ammunition and blankets, of which I was in great need; I took them, and gave what I had in exchange. Rex is yours, and any thing else I have. I caught him when a cub, and tamed him to be my companion."

"You owe me nothing, Mr. Cartwright," interposed Phil; "you have saved my life."

Again the sad shadow passed over the old man's face, as if a strange vision had risen before his eyes. He seemed to have become much softened during his seclusion, and Phil felt drawn toward him in spite of his fears.

"I would wrong no one now," he said, as if to himself. "Phil!" he exclaimed, suddenly, seizing the boy by the arm, "I have never forgotten the hand-writing in the old copy-book; I recognized it. It taught me to love my enemies. Can you forgive me, Phil, for my cruel treatment? Yes, you did forgive me long ago. But I could not forgive my fancied wrongs. O, what a wretch am I!" and the school-master buried his face in his hands, while his great frame shook with his emotions.

Phil stood by in silence, not knowing what to do or say, and wishing himself safe at home again. It seemed months since he had left it.

"But, Phil, my boy," suddenly the old man resumed, "I have made some amends; I saved

you yesterday. I saw you in the lake, and when Jack was gone, I put out in my canoe, took you from the boat and brought you here. Now, if you and Jack are willing to call the debt discharged, you may go, with my thanks. I will take you and Rex across the lake, where you can find your way to Simonds's. But I have an urgent request to make of you; please do not divulge my name or retreat, nor tell any thing of me more than Jack knows. Will you do this, my dear boy, and allow me to spend the brief remainder of my days in this hermitage?"

"I will promise," replied Phil; "and you can rely on my word."

"I know it, I know it; you are a boy of truth—the best reputation a youth can bear. May it never be sullied as mine has been!"

"But will you not tell me," continued Phil, "why you hide yourself from every body? You may be sick here. You might die here, and no one would know it."

"That is my wish," calmly replied the hermit,

I have forfeited all claims upon my fellow-men. I have done that which would drive me from every threshold if it were known. I came here to escape from myself. But no man can escape from himself. A man's most constant companion is his conscience. If that is his enemy, he can never find peace. It has not been mine for nearly half a century. In this wilderness I strive to hide my crime and conscience. The sooner we are buried together in this cave, the better."

Phil stood awe-struck and could say no more. The hermit suddenly turned to a hidden cell in the rock, took out a faded package, and drew from it a delicate miniature on ivory, which he handed to Phil. "Take this," he said, "but don't let it be seen until I am dead. It is the portrait of a good and noble woman whom I most deeply wronged. It was many years ago, but she is still living and suffering. This is too beautiful a thing to be buried with me. Take it and keep it in remembrance of your old teacher, a guilty and forgotten man."

He said no more, but motioned Phil to follow him. Then he prepared to ascend the ladder. Phil and Rex followed out of the cave. Silently he threaded the forest to a secluded bank of the lake, where, hidden amid the reeds and lilies, was a small log canoe. He told Phil to enter, Rex followed along the shore, and the hermit, with a strong, silent stroke, paddled the canoe to the foot of the lake, keeping concealed in the foliage on the banks until they were near Simonds's, when he bade Phil alight. He called Rex, patted the animal affectionately on the head, grasped Phil's hand with a strong, trembling pressure, whispered "Good-bye," and quickly shot out of sight.

Phil and Rex slowly approached Mrs. Simonds's, and stood before her door just as she was sitting down to tea. When she caught sight of him and the bear, she sprang from her seat, nearly overturning the table, and exclaimed, "Wal, now! I declare, if this doesn't beat me all holler; thar's that boy alive, and a leadin' a bar! We thought you was drownded

sure, and Rod was just goin' up to the village to tell your folks. We have sarched the whole lake and the woods to find ye. Bless you! come in and have some supper. Wal, wal! I declare!"

The widow's exclamations were broken by another's more joyful still. It was Jack. He was nearly exhausted by his search for his friend, and his eyes were red with weeping, as he sprang over a chair, and exclaimed:

"O, Phil, Phil! you dear, old scalawag. Is it you? alive and well?" and he sprang upon him, nearly choking him. "And Rex, too! This beats me. Hurrah! Hurrah!"

After supper they started for home. Even happier than when they set out, Jack and Phil reached Indian Landing and climbed the hill toward home. Great was the sensation they caused as they went up the village street followed by Rex. They had no fish to show, but they had caught an unsuspected prize.

"T-t-take care there, boys, he's a savage beast and may bite," shouted Jack to the boys

that followed the strange caravan. Before they reached home they were surrounded by a concourse second only to that which accompanied the circus on its annual entrance. Certainly no showman ever recounted more marvelous tales of this "rare specimen," than Jack related of Rex and his doings. Fact and fable were so intermingled in his narrative of the mysterious camp that little was believed. The bear was the sole incontestable proof of his story. Phil kept his secret, explaining satisfactorily to Jack his rescue from the boat, and making him promise to say nothing about the accident.

The grand expedition came to an end, as all things do, and Jack was obliged to return. The friends parted, consoled by oft-repeated declarations to renew the visit and the excursion. They did not know that nothing can be repeated in this world, and, happily, were in ignorance of what was to befall them before they should see one another's faces again.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BOARDING-SCHOOL.

PHIL was very fond of reading. This was before the golden age of juvenile literature. He found his greatest delight in that most entertaining of romances, Rollin's "Ancient History." Alexander, Cyrus, and Zenobia, in her desert capital, were his heroes. They dwelt in the realms of his imagination more vast and gorgeous than that of any conqueror. This was education to him, though he did not know it; nor did his parents. In common with most others, they did not realize how large a part of a youth's education can be obtained out of school. They wished Phil to be in school, and he was anxious to go to boarding-school, for his fancy was fired by the stories he had read of boarding-school life. Mr. Goodenough had left the

village after his brief political career, and there was no school in the village suitable for Phil.

He was now nearly fifteen years old, the age when the young mind takes in every thing like a hungry polyp reaching out its tentacles in every direction and absorbing all it can lay hold of. Phil wanted something more substantial than Rollin's romances. He was at that age when he could grasp a problem in algebra as a squirrel does a nut, and gnaw it as eagerly and frisk as gayly when he had found the kernel.

His parents at length decided to send him away to school, for a term at least. He was delighted with the prospect, and hastened to impart the good news to his friend Amy. He had not seen her much since the close of their school. She seemed much pleased to hear of his good fortune.

"You will be a great scholar, Phil," she said, "and learn to talk Latin—and be above your old friends, perhaps," she added, archly.

"No danger of that," he replied. "But I mean to study hard so as to get an education as soon as possible, and begin to do something in the world. I am tired of being a boy. Every body says, 'He's only a boy.' It's, Phil do this, and Phil run there; but when any thing nice is going on, they say, 'O, run away, you horrid boy.' Men seem to think that boys don't understand things, but I tell you they do. We see what's going on, if we don't say much; and I don't believe, if we were men, we'd make such fools of ourselves as they do."

"You don't know, Phil," she replied, with a coquettish laugh, which made him feel that he might do something foolish sometime. "But I am real glad you're going to school, and I am sure you'll come back as strong and wise as any body."

"And we shall have good times, too," said he. "I mean to have a hand in what fun is going on, without neglecting my studies. But I will have to study awful hard. Just look at

this catalogue. Here are Latin fables, Cæsar and Virgil, Astronomy, Rhetoric and Logic, Geometry and German ; and, to cap the climax, Evidences of Christianity and Butler's Analogy. These rough things are to polish us off with, I suppose, as they do marble with pumice when it is cut."

"Perhaps they are to polish off the catalogue," suggested Amy.

"I had not thought of that," said he. "Anyhow, I guess I'll stand it." Then he bade her a reluctant good-bye.

The academy to which Phil's parents decided to send him was called by the students the G. W. Sem., or, in full, the Greenburg Wesleyan Seminary, the baptismal name of all Methodist institutions, in honor of their founder, called by Phil's friend, Jack Wesley. Phil found himself one morning in the pleasant, shady village of Greenburg, whose broad and level streets were a pleasing contrast to those of his native village, where the houses had to be propped up to keep them from falling

down hill, and some looked upon the roof of their neighbors.

With modesty he took his place in the chapel of the square old stone building known as the Sem., but called, as he afterward learned, by an old reprobate in the village, "a priest factory." In the chapel the school was gathered for opening exercises, where Phil gazed with awe upon the principal, whose gold-bowed spectacles were to him the expression of all wisdom, and the dignified young preceptress, whom the girls called "Celestial." Most of the students were the sons and daughters of the neighboring farmers; but one tall, well-dressed youth was from New York. Another short, dark-skinned young man was pointed out as the wearer of the enviable title of the best scholar in school. "He studies Virgil," it was whispered. Phil looked at him in wonder, "how one small head could carry all he knew," as he thought of his own slight incursions into the domain of the Romans, limited to such occult phrases as *Rusticus arat*

and *Canis latrat.* But he soon learned to *parrotize* his *hic, hæc, hoc,* as well as the best. Yet he felt that the Romans had been more severe to their modern than to their ancient enemies, for they left the latter their native tongues, while their inhumanity toward moderns has made countless school-boys weep.

This, however, was before Cæsar had begun to spell his name with a K, in his correspondence with Ariovistus, and the smooth-tongued Cicero had discovered that his name was Kik-a-ro.

Phil was informed that it was all valuable for "discipline," and he took it in, as he had done his doses of physic, "for the good of his constitution;" though, when he came to look back upon those school-days, his most abiding impressions were of his mathematical and English studies, and his associations with his companions. His new studies and his associations were a stimulus to him; he studied hard, and enjoyed it. At the end of the first quarter he was near the head of his class, and he

never felt prouder than when he heard his teacher say to his father, "Phil has done a good deal of hard work this term."

But a reaction came. The youthful bow cannot be always bent. Wise are those who know how and when to unstring it. The next term Phil had become acquainted with his companions, and his spirits and sociability soon made him a favorite with them. There were older ones to lead in the mischief, and Phil was ready to join, but not with the idea of some students, that a certain amount of rowdyism is necessary to a complete education. A wild spirit seemed suddenly to be let loose in the air, and mysterious things to happen without the knowledge of any one. Indeed, that mysterious person, called Nemo, had more than his share of blame to bear at this time. "Nobody knows; nobody did it," was often heard.

One morning the school-bell refused to ring at the usual call, and a careful investigation revealed that it had turned itself upward and

become filled with water, which had frozen in that position. How it was done, "nobody" knew; but he would not tell. There was an old stove in one of the class-rooms, which refused to give out heat, and which the shivering pupils had often anathematized as they gazed upon its black and cheerless visage in the vain quest for warmth. One morning it was gone. But it found a place of congenial coldness, for in the spring, when the ice in the river broke up, the old stove was seen standing upright upon a cake of ice and calmly floating down the river. "Nobody" could tell how it came there. Again the chapel floor was sometimes thought not to be thoroughly cleansed; but one morning it was found covered with a foot of water. A large hose had been attached to the neighboring hydrant, inserted into a window, and the water left running all night. The floor was clean for once.

While these mysterious "manifestations" were going on, Phil was punctual to his lessons as usual, but it began to be suspected

that he knew something about them, though his teachers would not believe him to be implicated in them. The leading spirit among the boys in all their frolics and mischief was the boy from New York, whose name was Harold Van Courtland. His father had sent him far from home to remove him from all his city associates, and to place him where there would be as little opportunity as possible for mischief. But the place where boys can't find mischief has not yet been discovered by Stanley or Kane. Harold was by no means a bad boy; simply an average, wide-awake boy, crammed full of spirits and fun: "A perfect brick," as he expressed it, "with all the corners on." But these are the material which, properly handled, may be built up into the most useful manhood. Harold was a generous, well-rounded boy, quick to learn or do any thing, and just as quick for any kind of fun. He was about Phil's age, of a fair complexion, and, in fact, somewhat resembled him, except that he was taller and more matured in some

things. There sprang up between the two boys a genuine friendship. Phil greatly admired Harold's elegant appearance and air of acquaintance with the world, which he so greatly desired to know. He never tired of hearing him tell of the places and schools he had visited, and of his home in the city.

One of Harold's chief discussions was as to the quality and quantity of rations provided for the young boarders, who all seemed to have the Oliver Twistian want for more. This charge was not strictly original or confined to this boarding-school. For while it is sometimes charged that there is much "cramming" in some of these institutes, no complaint on this score has ever been heard from the stomachs of the patients.

One evening, as Phil and several others were gathered in Harold's room, he exclaimed:

"I say, fellers, I'm as hungry as a bear. What are two thin slices of bread and a cup of milk to the gnawings of—"

"Of a guilty conscience," interrupted Phil.

"Talking of conscience," replied Harold, "who let that decrepit old stove fall off from the plank as it was going down from the window and break its leg, making it a cripple for life?"

"Behold the young Hercules," replied Phil, "who cleansed the Augean chapel by turning into it the waters of the river—what do you call it?"

"Oswegatchie," suggested Harold. "But, Hercules or not, I'm hungry; and I propose to make a raid on the commissary, which is to say, being interpreted, the bread-and-butter barracks."

"Agreed!" they all cried.

"But who will put the bell upon the cat?" asked Phil. "That is, break into the pantry."

"I will," answered Harold. "Come on."

So they removed their shoes, and as still as mice they threaded the dark halls, like the mice in fear of the cat which might at any moment pounce upon them. They reached the pantry safely, but found it locked. Harold

tried the door, but all his strength and that of the other boys pushing behind him could not force it open.

"It's no go," he said, softly; "we must try some other way."

"Here's the little window where they pass out the grub," said Phil, who was nearest to it. "Perhaps we can get in here."

"Gelorious! Try it," replied Harold, with excitement; and before Phil knew it they had lifted him from his feet and pushed him, head first, through the opening into the pantry. Once in, there was nothing to do but to hand out whatever he could find. First came two roasted chickens.

"Here's Prex," said Harold, as he took the fowl and handed it to the boys, amid suppressed merriment; "and here's Mrs. Prex. Now hand out Young Prof. and Celestial. Here's richness," Harold continued, as Phil handed out a jar of preserves; "and cookies more precious than the coins of Marcus Aurelius, for they are not quite so hard, and have

had grains of sugar sprinkled in them. Now give us some pickles to sweeten them with—hush—sh!" But the warning was too late. There was a quick step, a strong hand grasped one of the marauders, and others disappeared as quickly as mice before the cat. Among those who reached their room undiscovered was Harold, with a chicken under his arm, the jar of preserves in his hand, and a cooky in his mouth, which almost choked him in his efforts to swallow it. He hastily put the jar in the closet, the chicken in his drawer, and jumped into bed, when a knock came at his door. He feigned to be snoring in sleep, and not to hear; but in vain. The door opened, Young Prof. entered, struck a light, and bade him rise. Harold did so, with a portion of his clothing on which he had not had time to remove. But he said nothing, for he was almost bursting with suppressed laughter at his situation, standing there in his trousers and stockings, with the cooky still in his mouth and the preserves sticking to his fingers. The professor

could but notice the expression of mingled amusement and alarm in his face, and the evident haste with which he had retired.

"Are you in the habit of going to bed, sir, in your trousers and stockings?" he demanded.

"Ah—yes, sir. That is—no, sir," Harold stammered. "In fact, sir, I retired in somewhat of a hurry—I was so sleepy."

"I should judge so," answered the young professor, who could scarcely restrain his own smiles, while he began to look around the room. He soon discovered the chicken and preserves. "Are you also in the habit of dining at night?" he asked. "Where did these come from?"

"N-no, sir, not regularly," Harold replied. "Those things came from the pantry, I believe." For though he had done wrong, he scorned to hide it by a falsehood.

"And where is your chum, Phil Vernon?" continued the professor.

This was the first that Phil's situation had occurred to Harold. They had left him in the

pantry, but he did not know where he was then, and answered, truly:

"I don't know, sir."

"Was he not with you?"

"I decline to answer that," Harold replied. "I will tell of myself, but you must not expect me to report my companions."

The professor saw that it would be useless to question him further, and said:

"You will report to the principal to-morrow morning after chapel. In the meantime I will take charge of Prex and the preserves. Good-night. But I would advise you not to snore too loudly, you might disturb your neighbors."

Harold, left alone, burst into laughter, but soon became serious when he thought of what a box he had left Phil in. He could not think what had become of him, and felt no little anxiety to know whether he had escaped or been caught at the very scene of their depredation. Long and eagerly he waited and listened for Phil's returning footsteps in the

hall. Now that all was quiet again, he expected that Phil had hidden somewhere and would soon return. But no Phil came. At length he fell asleep on his bed, leaving his door unlocked. Toward morning he was aroused by Phil suddenly bursting into the room with his teeth chattering, his clothes dripping, and himself shivering with cold.

"I am thy father's ghost," whispered Phil, as he sprang into the room, "but it is 'a nipping and an eager air' down there in that pickle barrel!"

"In the what?" asked Harold, in amazement.

"In the pickle barrel," repeated Phil. "That is where I passed the night. When the professor pounced upon you, I had just lifted the cover of the barrel. It was not half-full, and as I heard the rush outside I was so frightened that I jumped right into the barrel and pulled the cover over my head. After the boys were all gone the professor came into the pantry and looked around. 'Strange,' he said,

'how those rascals could have got in here and out again undetected, for the door was locked.' I just kept quiet there in the barrel until he went away and locked the door."

"Then why didn't you come out?" asked Harold.

"I couldn't," replied Phil, "for they had locked the window, too, and I was caged. I had plenty to eat, but I wasn't hungry. I thought how my parents would feel to know that I had been caught in such an affair when they had done so much to send me here."

"You ought to have thought of that before," remarked Harold. "But how did you get out at last?"

"I just waited there in the cold until I heard some one coming, when I jumped into the barrel again."

"Good for the pickles!" exclaimed Harold, laughing.

Phil continued: "It was the black cook come to get something for breakfast. I watched until her back was turned, when up

popped the cover, and I sprang out and ran for my room, while Dinah dropped her knife in terror and screamed, 'O, de old skratch! he's dar, he's dar!' I don't think she knew me, and no one saw me," concluded Phil, while Harold rolled on the bed trying to stifle his laughter with the bed-clothes.

"Phil, you're a trump," he exclaimed. "We'll have that account written up for the next number of the 'Seminary Argus,' with the thrilling title, 'The Haunted Pantry; or, The Demon in the Pickle Barrel.'" He then described his call from the professor, and his invitation for the morning. "They don't suspect you, Phil, I think," said he; "at any rate, they wont find out any thing from me."

"Don't tell any thing that isn't true," said Phil; for though anxious to escape detection, he would neither lie nor have any one lie for him.

"I shall say nothing," Harold answered.

"But what if they ask you?"

"Not a word about any one but myself will they get out of me."

Thus it was agreed, and the boys tried to get a little sleep before the ordeal of the coming day. They had just fallen asleep when the bell rang for rising. They went down to breakfast with as innocent faces as they could command. But they could hardly control their countenances when they saw some pickles on the table, an unusual thing for breakfast. Both declined them when passed. It soon became noticed that most of the boys declined pickles, though a new barrel had been substituted for the one which had preserved Phil. Harold was called before the principal, and made a clean breast of his part in the affair, but he would give no information as to the boy in the barrel, though the principal commanded him, in his sternest tones, and with his severest frown over his gold spectacles. At length the obstinate pupil was threatened with expulsion if he would not confess. Harold then prepared to go home, for he had no idea of yielding. Then the students held a caucus, and solemnly resolved, with many eloquent philip-

pics against the tyranny of school officers, that they would go also if Harold were expelled. They had not yet heard from home, and seemed to imagine that they were the school instead of those who conducted it. But before they had occasion to carry out their foolish resolutions, Phil, finding that his friend was likely to suffer for him, informed the boys that he would not hide behind another, but that it was more manly to confess, and he should do so.

This put the case in its true light, and soon after the principal was much surprised to see the boys come in a body to his room, and one after another confess his share in the matter. That put an end to the trouble, and there was a much better feeling all around. But the offense had to be punished. The culprits were all publicly reprimanded and reported to their parents, and deprived of certain privileges for a long time; so long, that they concluded that their fun in the pantry had not paid after all, as wrong-doing never does in the end.

Sometime after, when the boys supposed it

was all forgotten, they each received a private invitation to take tea with the principal. They were somewhat surprised to find that those invited were the ones engaged in the pantry party. But when the professor carved two cold roast chickens, and asked them if they would have a slice of Prex, or Mrs. Prex, their confusion prevented them from answering. And when the pickles were passed and pressed upon them, with the assurance that they were fresh, they felt obliged to eat them, although they almost choked in the attempt.

"Boys, let me help you to some more of the preserves," said the principal, in his blandest tone. "You surely like sweets; but," he concluded, seriously, "they may be purchased too dearly. Boys will be boys. They have large stomachs and, sometimes, empty heads. We bear with them because they are boys, and we expect them to outgrow their foolishness. But do not, therefore, think that it is wisdom, or that it is admired by any sensible person. The sooner you begin to put away childish things,

the sooner you will be men. Now let us have some innocent games."

They heartily joined in sport, and as they went home, Phil declared it was the best lesson he had learned at school.

On the last day of the term, as Harold was packing his trunk for his return home during vacation, Phil, who was assisting with a heavy heart, for he was not to return, noticed a photograph of a bright miss of fifteen, which struck his attention in a peculiar manner on account of a strong resemblance to one he had seen before. "Who is it?" he asked.

"O, that is my sister, Katrina. Have not I told you of her? She is a year younger than I am; but she is a proud one: 'my Lady Dignity,' I call her; but she is all right, when you know her as well as I do. I wish you could meet her. You must come down and visit me, wont you?"

But Phil did not hear half of his friend's words. He was absorbed by the picture.

"What do you find so attractive in that

photo?" broke in Harold. "You can keep it if you like. I have more."

Phil thanked him and put it in his pocket. Then he bade his friend good-bye and they parted. When he reached his home he hastened to his room and unlocked the portrait which the hermit had given him. He took it out and compared it with the photograph of Harold's sister. There was certainly a striking resemblance between them, but it was entirely unaccountable to him.

CHAPTER XIX.

JACK.

SINCE Jack's visit, Phil had received but few letters from him. Soon after his return from school the following letter came:

"PHIL, DEAR PHIL:

"Your last letter reached me amid scenes of sadness and sorrow. My dear father is no more. He has gone to heaven and left a sad family. He died last Sunday morning, almost instantly. Yes, Phil, he has gone to glory, and his eldest son is bound to meet him there. That morning he called me up with his clear, ringing voice, as clear as he ever called me in his life. I little thought it was the last time that he would call me by name. But father is dead, and I am an orphan! I don't know what we shall do. I can write no more.

"Your sad friend, JACK."

Phil at once deeply sympathized with his friend in the greatest loss that can befall a boy. Jack was now over sixteen years old, a strong, active boy, much needing a father's guiding hand. But his native nobleness now came to the surface. He threw himself into work with all his energy to help support his mother and younger brothers and sisters; for the salary of an itinerant preacher, with a large family, does not leave much with which to provide against the day of his death. The next that Phil heard from his friend was that he had obtained a situation on the railroad, and was working hard.

Meantime the civil war, which all thought would end with a summer's campaign, had spread its shadow over the whole land. None read the papers or sought for news more eagerly than Phil. No heart beat higher at the news of a victory, and none was stancher in the day of defeat. He never lost faith in the ultimate triumph of the Union, though many older and wiser ones ceased to hope.

One calm, moonlight Sunday evening, Phil and Amy Dean walked home together through the peaceful village streets, and talked in earnest tones of the one subject on every heart. She had lost all hope; Phil still had faith in the final victory; but his heart was throbbing with a deeper feeling, which was then swelling in many a young breast.

"Amy," said he, at last, in earnest tones, "I have received a letter from Jack. He has enlisted."

"Enlisted!" she exclaimed, as she grasped his arm, while he felt her hand tremble. "Are you in earnest? Jack is but a boy and cannot endure even the hardship of camp life, not to speak of battle." And she shuddered as she spoke those words.

"It is true," replied Phil, "I will read his letter:

"'My dear Phil:

"'I have enlisted in the 16th New York Cavalry, and shall next week go into camp.

I am with Captain G——, my brother-in-law, who was my sister's beau. Wont it be fun to have nothing to do but ride a horse and fight the Rebs? You wouldn't know your old friend in his blue uniform. I have bought a horse from a farmer (to be paid for by Uncle Sam), and you should see me dashing along the roads and through the streets learning to ride.

"'But the best of it is, I received $600 bounty. Think of that—all in greenbacks. I gave them all to mother, to help buy a little house for her and the children. Between you and me, that is the principal reason why I enlisted. I cannot bear to see her working so hard and having so much anxiety, when I could get so much money so easily. And I can send her, besides, all my wages. She does not know why I enlisted. If I should never come back, I will have done so much for my mother. But I will come back, you bet; then "We'll all feel gay, when Johnny comes marching home." The next

time you hear from me it will be from the "tented field." Good-bye.

"'Your old friend, JACK.'"

Phil was greatly surprised when he received this news. He could not think of his boy friend, with whom he had roamed the fields, as a blue-coated cavalryman, with clanging spurs and saber, riding on a raid or to the charge. Yet it stirred within him all his martial zeal, and he had entreated his father to allow him to go with his friend; but in vain. When he finished reading the letter to Amy, she stood for a moment pale and speechless, then she looked up and whispered:

"O, what if he should never come back?"

"He'll come back," replied Phil, stoutly. "He'll be the bravest soldier in the army, rise to be an officer, and come home covered with epaulets and honor. Then wont we be proud of our soldier friend? I only wish I could go."

"Has he really gone? He is so young! Poor Jack!" was all Amy could say.

But Phil persisted in looking on the other side of the picture.

"He is not poor Jack," he replied. "He is almost eighteen years old. He is tall as a man, and as strong and brave as a lion."

"Will you tell me all about him?" continued she, not heeding Phil's praises. "Let me know all he writes, and how he is?" she pleaded, with an earnestness which seemed to him not quite called for.

"Of course I will," he answered. "Jack promised to write me every thing, and I will tell you all. I only wish my father would let me go; but he will not: says I'm too young."

Through the long weeks of that autumn and winter their principal occupation was writing to Jack and reading his letters, and talking over every incident of the war. Phil was glad of the opportunity of being so much with Amy, while his interest was about equally divided between her and his soldier friend. Once only Jack inquired about her. "Does she remember me and inquire about me?" he

asked. Phil replied most enthusiastically, and sent him her picture, which she offered in return for one of Jack's which she had obtained from Phil.

It was a long time after Jack's departure before Phil had heard from him. The letter explained its delay. It was dated,

"CAMP NEAR FAIRFAX C. H., VA., *Oct.* 9, 1863.

"MY DEAR FRIEND PHIL:

"Why don't you write to me oftener and keep me posted? I will make a bargain with you. If you will write once a fortnight, I will. The reason why I have not answered your letter before is that I have been sick in the hospital. Camp fever seized me as one of its first victims, and I have had quite a serious time with the miserable old complaint. But I am on the high road to health now, and out of the gloomy walls of that old hospital, and like soldiering better than ever. Bully for me, eh? Our fare here is salt horse, in abun-

dance; fat pork, a plenty; bread scarce, butter scarcer. However, I manage to live very well. The guerrillas and bush-whackers are thicker around here than flies in summer. Our pickets are fired on nearly every night; but the cowards will not show their ugly carcasses for fear of an ounce of lead from our carbines. I came very near getting into a muddle once. We were out on a scout below Centerville, about twenty miles, right in the guerrilla country, when my horse was taken lame and I had to be left behind all alone. I rode clear to Centerville in this manner; my horse had to walk all the way. I was unmolested, however, and got to camp all safe, where I had the satisfaction of having a new horse and a good one. We are all well armed indeed. Good sabers, large navy revolvers, and Sharpe's rifled revolving carbines, with which we can shoot six times a minute. Then we can shoot six times with our revolvers, and can fall back on our sabers, at a pinch; although, at a very *tight pinch*, I guess I would fall back on my good old horse.

Send me all the reading matter you can get. It is after taps and I must stop. Good-bye.

"From your friend,

JACK W. S."

Phil and Amy read this letter with varied feelings. They began to have some idea of war. Amy trembled as she thought of Jack suffering in the hospital and in danger from the guerrillas, while Phil was delighted in reading of Jack's martial accouterment, and believed that in a "tight pinch" his brave young friend would be the last to "fall back" upon his horse. The next time he met Amy he was surprised to see her bringing her arms full of papers and books.

"What are these for?" he asked.

"Why, to send to Jack," she replied. "Have you forgotten?"

Phil had sent a paper or two and forgotten his friend's request.

"I can't send all these," he said.

Amy's face fell; then it brightened.

"If you can't, I can," she replied, with earnestness. "I will send them by express."

Then Phil offered to send them for her. There were papers and story-books which she had treasured from a child, with her name in little crooked characters.

"And what is this?" Phil asked, as he drew out a sealed tumbler.

"O, that," she replied, with a blush, "is a tumbler of jelly that I made myself; he might be sick again, you know, and want something to eat besides 'salt horse.'"

So the package was dispatched to Jack. The soldier boy enjoyed the jelly with his hard fare.

Jack's next letter was still more stirring. It ran:

"Cav. Camp, on Munson Hill, Va.

"Dear friend Phil:

"Well, Phil, stirring times and scenes have prevented me from answering your letter

before. Here we are away back under the protection of the forts of Washington. We had to abandon our old camp in somewhat of a hurry, I tell you. Mr. Johnny Reb came up there in great haste, and gobbled up various parts of our regiment in one day; altogether, about sixty men. We had three men shot from our company before they got possession of our camp. My health is first-rate, but I get very tired sometimes now when we have to march a long way. It is not so easy to ride in a saddle all day as some imagine. We can hear the fighting over the river every day, but I guess they wont get Washington quite so easy as they imagine. Phil, this campaign is not going to end the war by a long shot. You may make up your mind to see the end of it when England interferes, and not before. I have had a bit of promotion since I wrote you last. It has pleased my rulers to make your humble servant quartermaster-sergeant. (How are you, Sergeant Sheppard?) It is better than being in the ranks, any way. Phil, let me give you my

candid opinion about this war. Grant may fight and win; Sherman may fight and win; Sheridan may fight and win; but they may as well all sit down and wait until the presidential campaign is over. For just so sure as another man than A. Lincoln is our next President, an unconditional and disgraceful peace will be patched up. Mark my word, a week or two before election there will be a large rebel force in Pennsylvania, and possibly in Ohio. Now, if you hear of a rebel raid on a large scale about that time, remember that I predicted it. The Rebs have turned their last corner, and if Lincoln is re-elected they will come whining back like whipped curs with their tails between their hind legs.

"Sheridan, Sherman, and Grant are three of the greatest military geniuses that ever stood upon the face of the earth; but, in my opinion, first and foremost stands our little Sheridan. Look at Cedar Creek, Fisher's Hill, Winchester, and, in fact, the entire length and breadth of the Shenandoah Valley, and see the

campaigns of our little cavalryman. He has exterminated from the face of the earth a veteran army of sixty thousand men, and turned defeat into a brilliant victory. All honor to 'Sheridan, Sheridan, cavalry Sheridan!'

"No more of war. O! how I would like to be in Florence with you and have some of our good times again! If you can read this, you can do better than I can, for I am writing on the ground, lying flat down. Good-bye.

"JACK.

"N. B.—Love to all."

Amy was looking over Phil's shoulders as he read.

"Did you see that?" exclaimed Phil, in enthusiasm; "he is promoted quartermaster-sergeant. Do you see how brave and wise he has grown? But what does he mean by this, 'N. B. [take notice.] Love to *all?*' Whom can he mean, I wonder?" He turned to Amy, but she was gone. When Phil read these words she quietly slipped away before Phil

could see her blushes. "Where has she gone?" he soliloquized. "This is queer." A light slowly dawned on his mind. For a moment the old feeling, when he challenged Jack to the duel, came over him. Then he repulsed it with scorn. From that day Phil had his battles to fight.

Jack's next letter told of real battles. He wrote in a coarse hand on a blotted and crumpled sheet of brown paper:

"DEAR FRIEND:

"Since I last wrote you, I have been in my first battle, regular stand up and fight for hour after hour. I mean not a little cavalry skirmish, but stand up and face their little *zip, zip, zips*, for half a day. Yes, Phil, away out and on toward the rebel capital, across the famous Rapidan, our regiment went one day last week for the purpose of destroying the railroad that conveyed the supplies to the army of General Early, in the Shenandoah Valley. After accomplishing all we came for, burning bridges,

tearing up the track, cutting the wires, etc., we took up our line of march for camp, distant one hundred miles. As we neared Culpepper, continued firing on the advance announced that we were approaching the line of General M'Cloud's division, said to be one of the best in the rebel army. Remember, Phil, our party numbered only three hundred and fifty. As we neared Piney mountain, our column was suddenly opened upon by artillery and musketry, and we, a little band of three hundred and fifty of the Sixteenth New York Cavalry, stood face to face with the best division in Early's corps. Making a circuit to avoid their artillery, we boldly charged their long line of infantry. Four times we were driven back in succession, but, never daunted, we charged them again, broke their line, and then never stopped until we reached Kelly's Ford, on the Rappahannock, fighting all the way. There we charged them again, crossed the Ford, and returned to camp, with the loss of one third of our men and nine officers. Phil, this is the

first hard fight I have been in, and I have come out safe, thanks to a kind Providence. In great haste.

"JACK,

"*Q. M. Sergt. Co. F, 16th Cav.*"

Phil did not see so much of Amy now, and when they did meet there was not the same freedom of conversation between them. He did not cease to tell the praises of his soldier friend, to which she always listened intently, but she did not inquire after him now as much as before. But Phil did not delay to bring to her every letter that he received from Jack, and ask if she wished to send him any word. But she only answered, quietly, "No."

Phil was daily growing taller and stronger, and looking to the day when he might be a soldier, when he received a letter from Jack which made him sick at heart. He could not read the letter to Amy, but told her part of its contents. It was dated:

"CAV. CAMP ANANDALE, VA., *June* 25, 1864.

"MY DEAR FRIEND PHIL:

"I have at length sat down to answer your last kind letter, but my heart is sad, my feelings are depressed and melancholy. On the 6th of May was the first day's battle of the Wilderness; on the 15th I passed over the same battle-ground, and O, God of heaven! spare me from ever witnessing another such sight! Phil, without exaggeration, I can truly say that Grant never buried a man on this field, but left them as they fell to lie unburied, and a more awful and heart-sickening sight cannot be conceived of. Thousands upon thousands of moldering corpses lay on either hand, from the glittering uniform of a colonel to the plain uniform of the private. Naught else could be seen. O, it was an awful scene, terrible to behold! O the hearts that mourn! But this is not all. Poor Company F is ruined. It reported fifteen men for duty this morning out of forty-eight. Colonel Mosby has been playing cards with us and

won. My companions are gone. My bed-fellow lies in the hospital mortally wounded. My friends that enlisted with me are taken. Captain G., my brother-in-law, is shot in the face, but not fatally. It seems all must suffer; none are left; and, Phil, to think of the thousands upon tens of thousands that mourn! There were seventy-five of our men out on a scout, when they were suddenly attacked by above two hundred rebel cavalry and all killed, wounded, or taken prisoners, except one lieutenant and twenty men, who escaped to tell the sad story. Most of the seventy-five were from our company. I am well, but I never felt so sad and lonely since I came out. I have no heart left for any thing. God knows how it will end. I must close. I hear firing in our rear. In haste.

"Your old friend,

"JACK."

Amy asked Phil not to read her any more of Jack's letters, only to let her know if he were alive and well. There was no need.

This letter was the last. Many weary months they waited and looked in vain for another letter from their young hero. At length Phil learned that on the very day that Jack wrote, his regiment had been surrounded by the enemy and all killed or captured, Jack among the number. But whether he lay among the unknown dead, or was taken to the deeper burial and darker horrors of a rebel prison, he could not learn. Then he realized something of the horrors of war. The page of history assumed a new and thrilling interest in his eyes, and as the momentous days of the war passed into history, he began to feel that this was also the age of heroes, and to realize the inestimable cost of our liberties and union.

When he saw Amy, her pale face and sad eyes told of her secret sorrows. They spoke but little of their friend and hero, who had gone away so gayly to meet a soldier's fate.

CHAPTER XX.

IN THE CITY.

IT was now the spring of 1865, the last of the war. Sherman had made his "glorious march to the sea," captured Savannah and Columbia, and was advancing through North Carolina toward Grant, who, holding his intrenchments around Petersburg, in Virginia, was daily closing his grip upon Lee, while the rebellion was fast hastening to its "last ditch." The whole North was eagerly watching the last struggle and noting with joy every evidence of the exhaustion of the enemy, for it brought nearer the longed-for day of peace. The whole people were sick of war, and none more so than its leaders and heroes. "The glories of war" had forever vanished from the imagination of young and old of that generation, and the strife was continued only to

"conquer a [illegible] which should be lasting and beneficial [illegible] South and North.

It was during [illegible] dark days, just before the dawn, that Phil received a letter from Harold. It ran:

"DEAR PHILIP.

"Prepare to march; the enemy is upon you. I shall invade your place next Tuesday on my way home for vacation, and shall take you prisoner. No excuses will be accepted. So buckle on your knapsack and be ready to go with me. All is quiet on the Oswegatchie (now you are not here), and the pantry is safe, pickles included. Meet the stage Tuesday morning. In haste.

"TUUS AMICUS."

HAROLD VAN COURTLAND.

Phil was delighted with this announcement, and hastened to meet his friend, whose letter preceded him by only one day.

"What a jolly little village!" exclaimed Harold, as he alighted from the stage-coach.

"Why did you not tell me about it? These rocks and cliffs, and the winding river in its deep glen, with its high falls and romantic name, and the houses standing at all angles and elevations on the side of the hills; it's just splendid. How I would like to live here!"

"Perhaps you wouldn't find the people so interesting. But stay and make me a visit," replied Phil, "and I will show you how to have fun if you like out-door sports."

"Don't I!" replied Harold. "It's a hundred times jollier than being shut up in the streets of a noisy, dirty city, with thousands of ugly men, women, and children. But I can't stay long. You come home with me now, and I'll come some time and make you a visit."

Phil's mind was full of visions of the city, and he by no means shared Harold's opinion of it. Hence he was delighted to accept Harold's invitation. But Harold was so pleased with the village that he delayed his return several days, and was loath to go even

then; for he had found a new friend in Phil's sister Nell. Her frankness and fondness for fun at once surprised and pleased him. She was so different from his sister and the city girls of his acquaintance, that he was at once attracted toward her. There was no nonsense or affectation about her. In all their games of skill, agility, or strength, she was a match for the boys, whether at fox and geese, rowing, or fishing. She had even, in her younger days, been called a tom-boy, but no miss of her age could excel her skill upon the piano, or surpass her in her studies. Harold had a rather low estimate of girls in general, but his respect for them rose immensely when he found one who could beat him at chess and lead him on a horseback ride over the country. She had simply been brought up in the natural way in the same studies, sports, and exercises as her brother, and was none the less lady-like. Harold and Phil at length set out on what was to Phil the most eventful journey of his life. The ride on the cars, the people they

met, the places they passed through, were all full of interest to him. What two eyes can see more on a journey and what brain think faster than those of a wide-awake boy of sixteen? Those places which had some historical or personal association were much the more interesting to Phil. The story of the early settlement of the country, its Indian wars and the Revolution, were an Iliad of heroes to him, and as he passed through the villages of Herkimer, Oriskany, and Schenectady, he looked eagerly for some trace of the thrilling deeds which they had witnessed. He felt like taking off his hat when the names were called. But the imitation classic towns of Rome, Syracuse, and Ilion he passed without a word. As they swiftly sped along the bank of the noble Hudson, he was more impressed with its associations with Hendrick Hudson, Antony Van Corlear, Arnold, and Washington, than by its natural scenery, though as they neared New York the picturesque villas which stood on its eastern banks, and the lofty palisades, seemed

to him as romantic as the Rhine. He also noticed, with a boy's observation, that the rail-road tracks were laid but a little above the level of the river, and he thought they must be submerged in high water, until Harold explained that they were now so near the ocean, the great reservoir of all rivers, that no rise in them can effect its level. This brought clearly to Phil's mind the object of greatest interest connected with the city, the ocean. New York was described in his books as a sea-board city, and the sea-coast was to him the gate-way of the world. The first sight of the ships, with their tall masts and sails, and the huge black steam-ships, like monsters of the deep, were a revelation of romance to him connected with all the tales of discovery and shipwreck and adventure which he had delighted to read.

Harold declared that Phil asked questions that no fellow could answer. At length the lamp-posts appeared, and gradually grew closer together, and the long lines of dim, flickering lights which appeared down the

cross streets told him that he was at last in the great city. The cars slowed up, gradually came to a stop, and the tired boys emerged into the glare and din of the station. The shouts of the hackmen were their first introduction to the city. "Have a carriage?" "Say Nicholas!" "Gran' Central!" "Meetropolitan!" were the shouts which bewildered Phil as they entered the street.

"Who wants a cab?" shouted a red-faced Jehu as they passed.

"I give it up," answered Harold, as he elbowed their way past, and hailed a street-car. "I'm too nearly a busted corporation to patronize those leeches," said he to Phil.

When Phil rose, with a bow, to give his seat to a lady, Harold said:

"They'll know you are not a New Yorker if you do that;" but at the same time he rose also.

"There are worse things than not doing as the Romans do," replied Phil. "Where do you live?"

"In Stuyvesant Square," replied Harold.

"What! named after Peter Stuyvesant, the last Dutch governor? Have you seen the old Stuyvesant pear-tree that used to stand on his farm?" inquired Phil, eagerly.

"It is named after the old Dutchman, I suppose," replied Harold; "but I don't know any thing about the pear-tree. Look here, Phil, if you go on asking questions like that about every thing, they'll take you for a young antiquarian, and put you in the Historical Society with the mummies and Solomon's ring—"

"O, is there such a place? Can I see them?" interrupted Phil.

"If you want to mope around in such places, instead of having a good time, I suppose you can. But nobody here cares for the history of the city, or knows even if it has a history. They come here for what they can get out of it, to make money and spend it. But if you care about history, my father can talk to you. He is one of the Knickerbockers, the only genuine aristocracy we have. But you'll see plenty of

the codfish variety. I hate it. Give me a square, good fellow, I don't care how much money he has, or whether his grandfather was an earl or a hod-carrier. I guess if most of those who make the greatest spread were to go back to the occupations of their grandfathers they would be boatmen, blacksmiths, and servants. But here is our street. Jump out."

They alighted and entered a large plain brick mansion, beaming with respectability and good cheer. Phil received a cordial welcome from Harold's parents. Harold Van Courtland, Senior, was a pleasant, fine-looking man of about fifty years, whose kind manner soon put Phil at ease, though he felt a little awed at first by the unaccustomed elegance of his surroundings. Harold's mother was a quiet, dignified lady, who seemed to feel her Knickerbocker blood, which she did not possess, much more than her husband. But she condescendingly unbent to her son's friend.

"Hello, Kit, how are you?" exclaimed

Harold, as his sister Katrina entered the parlor, tall, stately, and proud, with the air of an experienced society belle.

"Ah, Harold, I am well; but you need not be quite so rude," replied she to his greeting, adjusting her hair, which had been slightly disarranged by her brother's hearty kiss. "And this is your friend, I presume, of whom you have written?" she continued, turning, somewhat coldly, to Phil.

"Yes," answered Harold, "he's the very chap, and a square brick, too. Philip Vernon, my sister Katrina," continued he; "otherwise, My Lady Dignity."

Phil bowed and blushed, feeling as embarrassed as before a mature lady, though she was, in fact, but a school-girl, younger than himself.

"You will excuse my brother, Mr. Vernon," she said to Phil; "he is so boyish; I don't believe he will ever be a man."

"And don't want to be, if this is the style," replied Harold, assuming the air and manner

of the fop of the period, with a caricature which made them all laugh.

Dinner was then announced, and they went down to the dining-room. Phil soon began to feel at home in this really pleasant family. Even Katrina forgot her dignity, which was only assumed, and laughed heartily at Harold's account of their school adventures. She looked upon Phil as a boy, but thought that, though unaccustomed to society, he had a manly appearance. His sincere admiration of the Knickerbockers opened the way for acquaintance between them, which rapidly increased.

A few days later an event took place which raised him very much in her estimation, though he made no effort to secure her approval, "when her dignity was on," as Harold said. Phil and Harold improved every moment in exploring the many points of interest in and about the city. Phil was lost in admiration of its matchless harbor, and could not rest until he had studied out the strange mingling of

land and water which constitutes Manhattan Island and vicinity. One morning they were strolling carelessly in Central Park, drinking in the fresh spring air and admiring its unique combinations of nature and art, when there arose a sudden commotion before them, and they perceived a runaway horse rushing down the carriage-way, and a lady pale and paralyzed with fright clinging to the carriage, from which the driver had been thrown. In an instant, Phil saw what was to be done if great danger and death were to be prevented. Without speaking he stepped toward the path of the frightened animal, and as it was about to dash past him, he sprang quickly before the horse and grasped the bit, throwing all his weight upon it at the instant. The horse was brought to his knees by the sudden check, and Phil fell to the ground with him. But before the animal could regain his feet others had caught him and saved them. The lady was taken, fainting, but uninjured, from the carriage; and Phil rose to his feet, bruised, but not seriously

hurt. He brushed the dust from his clothes and disappeared in the crowd. Harold soon found him, and exclaimed:

"Well, Phil, that was finely done. You're a trump, anyhow; you'll be in the papers now."

"What for?" asked Phil, surprised.

"Why, for stopping that horse, of course."

"They don't put such things as that in the papers, do they? That's nothing."

"You may think it nothing, but they put smaller things than that in," replied Harold. "Flora M'Flimsey's dress at the ball; the engagement of Ida M'Gellicuddy and Arthur Doolittle; the last bar-room row; and the latest scandal in high life. It's all news. O, you're a public character now."

And so it was. The runaway was served up with half a column of "reporter's English" in the "Herald" next morning, and Phil learned more about himself in reading it than he ever suspected, the chief drawback being that more than half of it was not true. But the effect upon Katrina was marked. Phil became quite

a hero in her eyes, seeing that his name was in the papers. On the other hand, as she became more natural in her manner, Phil began to admire her intelligence, and many pleasant conversations they had together, she being particularly interested in his account of his frontier home and adventures in the fields and woods. Phil never tired of telling of his soldier friend, Jack, and of his sad fate, in which she deeply sympathized; though, as he clearly saw, she knew nothing of the realities of the great struggle through which the nation was passing.

A few days after this occurrence, Phil made a discovery which greatly added to his perplexity in regard to Katrina's photograph, and the resemblance still more striking in her to the strange portrait at home. He was telling her of the resemblance between her portrait and one on ivory which he had seen of a young lady in the dress of a former generation. "She might have been your grandmother," said he.

"I will show you my grandmother's portrait," said she. "She was my father's mother, but I

have never seen her; she died when young, I believe; but father can tell you all about her."

So saying she left the room, and soon returned with a small ivory portrait and placed it in Phil's hands. They trembled as he opened it and saw before him the very features of his portrait, though, apparently, several years older. The resemblance between Katrina and her grandmother was apparent. But who was the original of his picture, and how did the hermit become possessed of it? These questions filled his mind until the arrival of Katrina's father, when he was asked by her to tell the story of her picture.

"It is the portrait of my mother," said he; "but I have only a very dim recollection of ever having seen her. I was brought up by Frederic and Mrs. Van Courtland, in this city, and always supposed they were my parents until, upon coming of age, I was informed that I had been adopted by them when four years old from an asylum, and that this portrait, which appeared to be that of my mother,

by the resemblance, was hung around my neck when they took me. All they could learn from the matron was, that it was around my neck when I was brought there by a strange man, who said it was my mother's, but he gave no name or clew to my parentage. The Van Courtlands were true parents to me, and I knew no others. They left me heir to their name and fortune. I have, since, often wished to solve the mystery of my childhood, and of the beautiful lady who was my mother. She must have been dead long since. I have never been able to find the slightest trace of her."

At this recital Phil longed to tell all he knew about the hermit, while thoughts of his grandmother's story flashed through his mind, leaving him too much confused to think. He told Mr. Van Courtland what he had told Katrina, that he had seen a portrait strongly resembling that of his mother, and that upon his return home he would make full inquiries. He did not feel at liberty to say more until he had seen the hermit.

Soon after this conversation came the news of the surrender of Lee, at Appomattox, which filled the country with joy; and, a few days later, that of the assassination of President Lincoln, at Washington, which touched every heart to its depths. But peace had come, and regiments of returning troops soon began to march through the city on the way to their northern homes. These were received with unbounded enthusiasm and hospitality. The bronzed and emaciated troops were supplied with every comfort, even the children in the streets running beside the ranks and pressing them to take another cake or cup of coffee. To Phil the sight was one he would never forget. The weather-stained faces and uniform of the veterans, and their torn and smoke-soiled silk flags, with which they had gone forth so gayly, told a story that brought tears to his eyes. His heart swelled with pride for them as he saw their martial tread and thought of the victories they had won, and he wished he had also been a soldier to

serve his country in the field. But when he thought of his lost friend, and of the thousands slain who could not share in their rejoicings, he felt that he might have been one of those to lie unburied on the battle-field or die like a dog in a southern prison.

One day, amid the returning troops he saw a small squad of cavalry, few and scarred, slowly riding up Broadway, and in front a pale young man carrying a flag, of which there was nothing left but the staff and a few fluttering strips. As they passed he eyed the banner and caught the figures, Sixteenth New York. He had been watching eagerly for the regiment of his friend, in hopes of hearing something more of his death, and now he determined to follow them until they dismounted. At the first opportunity he approached the young officer with anxious heart to inquire about Jack. Then he noticed that his left sleeve hung empty by his side, while his thin features told of great suffering and deprivation.

"Sergeant, can you tell me of a member of your regiment, Jack Sheppard?" asked Phil, with trembling tones.

"I am Sergeant Sheppard," was the reply.

"Jack!"

"Phil!"

And the friends were in each other's arms.

"Is it really you, Jack, alive?" asked Phil, as soon as he could speak. "We all thought you were dead."

"So I was, nearly; but I am all right now, thank God! O, Phil, how glad I am to see you! How did you come here?"

Phil told him, and invited him to visit his new friends.

"They will be delighted to see you," he urged. But Jack could not go, for he was not yet mustered out, and he also counted every moment which now separated him from his mother. So Phil hastened to bid his friends farewell and to accompany Jack home, after making Harold promise to visit him soon. As he and Jack rode homeward, the soldier ex-

plained his disappearance. He had been shot in a battle in the Shenandoah Valley, the very day of writing his last letter, and taken prisoner. His arm was amputated, and he lay for weeks in a rebel hospital, delirious, and hovering between life and death. But his youthful vigor finally prevailed and he regained partial strength. He was taken a prisoner to Richmond, and was about to be sent farther south, when the news came of Lee's surrender. He was set at liberty and found his regiment in Washington, which had been ordered there to take part in the funeral of Lincoln. Then they were sent to scour the country around in search of Booth and his accomplices.

"And we were successful," concluded Jack, with a soldier's pride. "We avenged the murder of our President. Booth was shot by Sergeant Corbett, of Company L, and his accomplice, Harrold, was captured. Isn't that an honor to the Sixteenth Cavalry?"

Thus the happy friends conversed every

moment of the memorable journey. The places through which he passed looked far different to Phil now. The history of the present threw the past into the shade. He did all in his power for the comfort of his friend, who was yet far from strong.

"Wont I make a raid on my mother's pantry when I get home!" said Jack, with eagerness, which reminded Phil of his raid on the school pantry and pickle barrel.

Jack laughed at the recital until the tears rolled down his cheek. Before they parted for their homes Jack casually mentioned Amy, and asked how she was.

"She was well until she heard you were dead," answered Phil; "but she will be bright enough when she hears the news, old boy. By the way, if you want to send any more love to *all*, you must take it yourself."

Then they parted, Jack promising to visit Phil as soon as he had seen his mother and became a little stronger.

CHAPTER XXI.

UNITED.

SOON after Phil's return home he heard from Harold, that he was coming to make him a visit.

"I want to see more of your delightful village," he wrote; "and Katrina has so far forgotten her dignity that she wants to come, too. She has developed a sudden interest in the places you have described to her, and says she wants to make the acquaintance of your sister. I don't know what has come over My Lady Dignity. I reckon she will be shocked by our romps, but she will come with me, if you have no objections."

Phil certainly had no "objections," and sent a very urgent invitation to Katrina, in which his parents and sister joined. But Phil did not yet feel quite at ease in the presence of

his city visitor. She, however, seemed to have left her dignity at home, and expressed great delight in the newness and rudeness of the northern village. She and Nell seemed to understand each other at once. While Phil's sister was pleased with Katrina's refinement and beauty, she, on the other hand, looked in admiration upon the ways of a girl who knew how to do every thing. It was a revelation of her own ignorance and inefficiency as regards all the real purposes of life, which made her resolve to learn at least one useful art. Though there was strong resemblance between Phil and Harold, there was none between Katrina and Nell. The latter was a brunette, like her mother, while Katrina was a graceful blonde, with all the vivacity of her brother, when "her dignity was not on," as he expressed it. When the guests were presented to Phil's grandmother in her room, she was much pleased with them, especially with Katrina's grace and beauty. Taking her slender hand in hers, she said:

"My dear, you remind me much of what I was at your age. Fifty years of sickness and suffering have left few traces of my youth. But I have not forgotten it, and I delight to see such creatures as you, fresh and fair as the butterfly in the sunlight. Dance and sparkle while you may, but beware of the rude touch of every thing which may brush the golden dust of innocence from those bright wings."

Katrina soon pressed Phil to show her the portrait of which he had spoken, and he consented, under the promise that she should not ask how he obtained it, until he was at liberty to tell. She was struck by the resemblance even more than he.

"It is a very good portrait of me," she exclaimed, "if dressed in that costume. But have you not also noticed a resemblance to your grandmother?"

Phil replied that he had not. But she declared that she could see it quite plainly.

Phil could wait no longer to see the hermit.

So he and Harold arranged a fishing excursion to Red Lake.

"This is just what I came for," exclaimed Harold, as they floated down the Indian river on a bright morning in June. "This is gorgeous; beats New York out of sight!"

The fishing was better than on Phil's last excursion, but his thoughts were bent upon another subject. His curiosity was aroused as much as on his former visit to the old camp with its strange occurrences, and he was eager to visit the cave and see if the hermit was still there. Then, as they floated down the quiet river, he told Harold of his adventures with Jack and the hermit. Harold listened in wonder.

"That beats Robinson Crusoe all out," he exclaimed. "Why have you not told me of this before?"

"I did not feel at liberty to do so," replied Phil; "but now I think you will have an interest in it as great as mine."

"I don't know what interest I can have in

it," said Harold, "except to see this queer old chap and his cave. Haul in the fish-lines; I'm after other game."

Fishing was abandoned, and they hastened to Red Lake. Entering it, they rowed directly to the opposite shore, climbed the cliff and found the old chopper's camp in much the same condition as Phil had left it. He looked quickly for the tin telephone, but could not find it. It had been removed to a place where it could not be found easily. They looked carefully around for the string, but could find no trace of it.

"What if he has skipped out?" suggested Harold. "That would be playing it pretty low on us."

Phil's heart sank at the thought. He hastened to the entrance of the cave, and, after a careful search, found the hollow trunk. He noticed that especial efforts had been made to conceal it since he had left it. The boys looked and listened closely, but could find no traces of occupant.

"It must be deserted," exclaimed Phil, in despair. "The door to the entrance has not been swung for a long time."

"But let us go in and see what we can find. Perhaps the old cove has left a will," suggested Harold, "and made us his heirs."

Phil cautiously entered the dark cavity and disappeared. Harold followed, but with thoughts of bears within that might seize his feet as he descended, which made him feel decidedly uncomfortable, though he would not say any thing about it to Phil. Soon the boys found themselves within the cave, and as their eyes became accustomed to the dim light they looked about them. The cave appeared much the same as when Phil saw it before. There were the same books and instruments lying about.

"He is not far away," said Phil.

At that moment Harold whispered:

"What is that?" and pointed to the low couch by the wall, where, amid a heap of furs and blankets, Phil saw the glow of a pair of

burning black eyes, almost hidden in the hermit's long hair and beard. A low groan was heard as he perceived them. Phil hastened to his side, and said:

"Don't you know me, Mr. Cartwright? It is I, Phil Vernon. What can I do for you? You are very ill."

The hermit pointed to a small cabinet in a projection of the rock, to which Phil hastened, and, opening it, found a flask of liquor, which he placed to the old man's lips. He revived slowly; then, fixing his burning eyes upon Phil and his companion, he whispered:

"Why did you come to disturb me? Let me die here in peace."

"Do not say that," replied Phil, with feeling. "We will care for you, and bring friends who will remove you to a place of comfort and ease."

"I wish only to die alone," continued the hermit. "I have no claim on my fellow-men, and ask nothing more than their forgetfulness. Why did you come again?"

"Because I want to ask you a question," answered Phil. "Who is the lady whose portrait you gave me?"

At these words the old man sank back upon his couch and lay for a long time with closed eyes, while the boys stood by in awe, fearing he would never speak again. At length he opened his eyes, took another draught of the stimulant, and said, with great effort:

"Phil, you are a true, honest boy. I don't know who your companion is, but confession may be good for the soul—if I have a soul—and where is there a purer priest than an innocent youth!" He clasped Phil's hand with a cold, feeble grasp, and continued, in broken sentences: "The portrait that I gave you is that of a lady whom I once wronged most deeply in revenge for a slight which I had no reason to resent. She married my rival, George Vernon, your grandfather, Phil. In desperate revenge I abducted her boy from a vessel on Long Island Sound. I did not intend to injure the child, and placed him in an

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orphan asylum in New York. I soon went to Europe, where I spent many years. On my return I lost all trace of the child. He had on his neck at the time a portrait of his mother. The one I had was given me before her marriage. Still fired by my resentment, I followed her to Florence, N. C., but she was spared seeing me, having been made an invalid by my act. The story of my remorse and punishment you know. I am forever cast out from the sight of men; here let me die."

He hid his face in his trembling hands.

"Mr. Cartwright! Mr. Cartwright!" Phil exclaimed, as the facts rushed together in his mind, "That lady is my grandmother. Her child is alive. He is this boy's father, Harold Van Courtland!"

The glazed eyes of the hermit turned toward them, a look as of faint comprehension of the fact that his great wrong was partly undone lighted his face for a moment, then his eyes closed and his lifeless hands dropped by his

side. The boys listened, awe-struck, for his breathing, but it came not.

"He is dead," whispered Harold. They covered his face and left him alone in his chosen tomb for life and death.

The boys hastened home, too bewildered by their discovery to talk much about it. As soon as they reached the village, Harold telegraphed to his father: "Come here quick. Bring your mother's picture. Phil is your uncle!"

Phil laughed when Harold told him what message he had sent.

"Well, it's all the same," he answered. "We're so mixed up that I don't know whether I'm your father or you're my brother, or what. We'll get it straightened out when father comes. Wont he be astonished!"

Phil's greatest anxiety now was as to the means of breaking the news to his grandmother. He took his parents into his counsel and showed them the portrait. Then they showed it to her. She at once recognized it as the one she had given to Theodore Carleton in

her girlhood. Then the story of Carleton and the hermit was told her without mentioning Phil's discovery in New York.

"He has suffered for his crime, perhaps, as much as I," she said. "Sin cannot go unpunished, for it carries its lash with it through the world. But what of my child?" she asked, after a long pause. "Did Carleton tell what became of him?"

"He did not know," they answered; "but we have reason to think he is living in New York, and we are inquiring for him."

"Is there hope at last, after half a century of separation from my babe?" she asked.

Then they left her and waited for Harold's father. He soon arrived. The portraits were compared and seen to be plainly those of the same lady. All was explained to him. Then, with the portrait of his mother on his neck as when, a prattling child, he was stolen from her, he was shown into her room. No one witnessed that sweet, solemn meeting between the aged mother and her long lost-son.

"Hurrah, Phil!" cried Harold. "Now I have it. Your grandmother is my grandmother, our fathers are brothers, and we are cousins. I thought we must be some relation, you are such a square fellow. And your sister Nell is my cousin, too; isn't that jolly?"

"And Katrina is my cousin," added Phil, while a queer shade of disappointment crept over their faces, and both burst into a hearty laugh.

Harold's father insisted upon sharing his fortune with his brother, and invited him to remove to New York. Their grandmother did not long survive the great joy of the strange discovery. In peace she took her departure to the better land. Jack came to visit Phil, and was a hero with them all. But to none was he quite so much of a hero as to Amy, whom he thanked heartily for the jelly and books. The broad sun of peace beamed again over a reunited nation, but nowhere shone on happier hearts than those of the youthful friends in the picturesque village of Florence.

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